

# **A STUDY OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

## **DISSERTATION**

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**BY**

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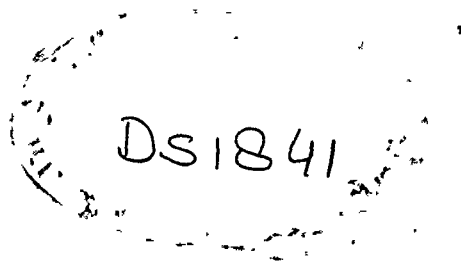


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degree.



**Prof. M. Rafique**  
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**TO MY PARENTS**

**(Dr. Md. Shakoor Ali & Mrs. Safiha Bano)**

And if any of you would punish in the name  
of righteousness and lay the ax unto the  
evil tree, let him see to its roots;  
And verily he will find the roots of the  
good and the bad, the fruitful and the  
fruitless, all entwined together in the  
silent heart of the earth.

**-KAHLIL GIBRAN, The Prophet.**

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C H A P T E R - I



## INTRODUCTION

### (a) Hegel's Life and Works :

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born at stuttgart on 27th August, 1770, in the Duchy of Wurttemberg. His lifespan (1770-1831) coincided with the most eventful period in modern history. In philosophy, politics, and literature, humanity was enriched with a galaxy of brilliant men of genius and Hegel occupied a prominent place amongst them during his life time. He devoted himself to the task of sustained reflection on ideas as well as historical movements. Hegel is commonly connected with Prussia, because he spent his later years in Berlin, and also because he gave an over enthusiastic philosophical endorsement to the Prussian state which was by no means a very benign government. However, his ancestors had long been connected with Swabia, and Hegel was hence a South German. His family was one of the many refugee protestant families which had fled from Austria to Wurttemberg during the persecutions of the counter-Reformation. Various members of his family were Craftsman, Officials, Scholars, and pastors. His father, George Ludwig Hegel, was a minor fiscal official in the service of the Duke of Wurttemberg. Hegel was highly impressed by his family atmosphere and this fact comes out in Hegel's philosophical writings,

in which there are idealized portraits of its various members. According to Hegel, Family is the immediate Ethical Substance. Hegel had got his basic schooling at the Gymnasium of Stuttgart at the age of seven. Here he secured his possession of contemporary learning and 'enlightenment' by an elaborate system of notes and extracts. It also explains the way in which Greek thought, and literature at that time mainly represented by Sophocles' plays and the Socratic dialogues, came to pass through his mind. One might say that Hegel stands out among the great modern philosophers as one who most thoroughly absorbed and understood the Greek thought.<sup>1</sup>

In 1788, at the age of eighteen, Hegel left the Stuttgart Gymnasium and entered the Theological Institute at Tübingen University, where he was a student for five years. Here he made his friendship with the poet, Friedrich Hölderlin and the Philosopher Schelling. The theology thought at the Institute exercised a great impact on the young men. Its rationalistic theistic proofs subdued their soaring spirits. Hegel was afterwards to characterise their doctrine rather ambivalently as 'a theology of the Understanding'.

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1. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1970), p. 28.

Hegel's stay at Tübingen was animated by the out break of the French Revolution. He sang the Marseillaise, made seditious speeches, alarming the officials of the Duke. At a later stage of his life, Hegel reacted strongly against the negative and merely abstract ideals of the Revolution. In The Phenomenology of Spirit, he says, 'Universal freedom can produce neither a positive achievement nor a deed ... it is merely the rage and fury of disappearance and destruction. He came to believe that true freedom can be achieved only in the laws and usages of some concrete community, in which alone the individual can find himself.'<sup>2</sup>

From 1793 to 1800, Hegel began to develop his own ideas. After graduating in 1793, he held two tutorial positions, the first not too congenial, with an aristocratic Bernese family and the second, more happily, in the household of a Frankfurt merchant in 1796. Further he engaged himself in the study of Kant's ethical writings and of his Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason. He also absorbed Fichte's early writings on 'theory of knowledge' and 'theory of morals' which coincided with the latter's

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2. Ibid., p. 29.

Jena Professorship. Hegel also read Schelling's early essays on the Philosophy of Nature (1797) and his Systems of Transcendental Idealism (1800), and corresponded frequently with Schelling throughout this period. Hegel too, like most philosophers of his time, was influenced by Spinoza with often surprising consequences.<sup>3</sup>

However, it must be said that Hegel developed his ideas, not so much in reaction to the opinions of other philosophers — past or contemporary — as in deep meditations on the meaning of that version of the Christian religion which he had been exposed to at Tübingen. We may say that in contrast to Fichte who approached the Absolute through morality, and Schelling whose path to the Absolute lay through art, Hegel approached his idea of the Absolute through religion. For Hegel, the message of Christianity was 'essentially' one with the moral law as set forth by Kant. Hegel, like many later thinkers, was unwilling to ascribe the positivity to the founder of Christianity. Hegel was inclined to attribute it to the restricted horizons of the time and to the Crassness of the Jews. In the Christian story of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of Christ, Hegel came to see a symbolic

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3. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

expression of his central thesis that what is absolute and spiritual can emerge only in painful triumph over what seems alien and recalcitrant. In fact, Hegel may be said to have infused the notions of Christianity into the very character of his arguments. At the end of his Frankfurt period Hegel produced a first outline of his system, which already contains the three divisions of the subsequent Encyclopedia: a Logic, a Philosophy of Nature and a Philosophy of Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of 1801, he joined his friend Schelling at Jena, and re-entered academic life as Lecturer. The two thinkers collaborated on an important essay on 'The Difference between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy' (1801), as well as in the writing and editing of the Critical Journal of Philosophy.

In the next four years Hegel became increasingly dissatisfied with the Philosophical premises as well as the formless romantic method of Schelling, along with his vague belief in an 'Absolute Identity'. Hegel also came to be rather critical of Schelling's position regarding

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4. Ibid., p. 30.

aesthetics as the supreme mode of access to the Absolute. During this period, Hegel became less willing to hold that the crowning insights of philosophy could be arrived at by 'intuition' or 'feeling'. He had begun to assert with increasing emphasis that they must emerge through<sup>a</sup> rational and necessary process, to which he gave the name of 'Dialectic'.<sup>5</sup>

At Jena, Hegel's new views and attitudes were expressed in his first major published work, Phenomenologie des Geistes (The Phenomenology of Mind, 1807). It is beyond doubt, one of the most brilliant and original works of Hegel. This work though completed in 1806, was not published until 1807, after Hegel left Jena to become editor of a daily paper at Bamberg in Bavaria. In 1808, Hegel was appointed rector of Gymnasium at Nuremberg, where he spent eight years (1808-1816). During this time he wrote his second great work, The Science of Logic, which was published in 1817.

Then Hegel returned to the University and held the Chair of Professor of Philosophy at Heidelberg from 1816 to 1818. In 1818, he was appointed Professor at the

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5. Ibid., p. 31.

University of Berlin up to his death in 1831. In 1816, was published his Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, which carries out the scheme, propounded in 1801, of a tripartite system containing a Logic, a Philosophy of Nature and a Philosophy of Spirit.<sup>6</sup>

The year 1820, saw the publication of his Outlines of the Philosophy of Right, which is an elaboration of the second part of the Philosophy of Spirit, containing his ethics and also his theory of the state. His most inspired reflections however, are found in the lectures given by him on the Philosophy of Religion, the Philosophy of History, the Philosophy of Fine Art and the History of Philosophy. These were published after the death of Hegel in 1831 by a group of his friends. The chief of the writings unpublished during Hegel's lifetime are the essay, 'Life of Jesus' (1795), 'The Positivity of the Christian Religion' (1796), and 'Spirit of Christianity and Its Destiny' (1799).

Hegel died on 14th November, 1831 due to a swift attack of Cholera, then epidemic in Berlin. On his request, he was buried beside Fichte and close to the grave of his friend, Solger.

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6. Ibid., p. 32.

(b) Hegel's Philosophy in brief:

The best approach to Hegel's Philosophy would be to try to understand his relationship to his predecessors such as Fichte and Schelling. We can safely assert that Hegel starts his philosophy on the foundations laid by Fichte and Schelling. He agrees with Schelling in insisting on a logical method. He undertakes to put the world-view of Schelling on a rational scientific basis. Similarly with Fichte, he agrees in identifying logic with ontology or metaphysics, and finally with both in conceiving reality as a living developing process, which constitutes a system of reason with its own laws. Hegel's whole philosophy is an endeavor to unfold and explicate these laws. This is what he means by his assertion that Thought and Reality are identical. For him, all being and reason are identical; the same process that is at work in reason, is present everywhere. The Absolute, on the other hand, is not an undifferentiated Absolute, as advocated by Schelling. Hegel in criticism of Schelling, characterizes his Absolute as 'the night in which all cows seem to be black'. Hegel also criticises Spinoza because he had regarded the Absolute as substance. Hegel says, the Absolute is a subject, which means



that it is life, process, evolution, as<sup>well as</sup> consciousness and knowledge. All life, all motion and action, are but an unconscious thinking and follow the law of thought. Hence, the more law there is in nature, the more rational is its activity. And, finally, the goal toward which the developing Absolute moves is self-consciousness. The meaning of the entire process lies in its highest development which is the realization of truth and goodness by a mind that knows the meaning and purpose of the universe and identifies itself with the universal purpose.

According to Hegel, the problem of philosophy is to know the world of nature and human experience, to study and comprehend the reason in things, not superficially and contingently, but to know their eternal essence, harmony and law. Things have a meaning, the processes in the world are rational. Therefore, one may say that reality is at bottom rational, a necessary, logical process of thought. It can be known only by thought, and the function of philosophy is to comprehend the laws or necessary forms by which reason operates. Logic and metaphysics are, therefore, identical. The world, however, is not static. It is dynamic. So is thought or reason. The notion, or the true concept,

is an active, moving process. It is a process of evolution. In evolution something that is undeveloped, undifferentiated, homogenous and in Hegel's sense 'abstract', develops, differentiates, divides, assumes many different opposing or contradictory forms, until at last a unified, concrete, particularized object, a unity in diversity, is achieved. The higher stage in this process of evolution is the realization of the lower. In Hegel's language, it is the truth <sup>not</sup> and/merely the goal or purpose of the lower but, its meaning. The world at every stage is both a product and a projection. The lower form is negated in the higher, that is, it is not what it was; but it is also preserved in the higher. Hegel employs the German word 'aufgehoben' to denote these ideas; and the process is known as the dialectical process.

This is the meaning of Hegel's contention that contradiction is the root of all life and movement, that the principle of contradiction rules the world. Everything tends to change and to pass over to its opposite. For example, the seed has in it the impulse to contradict itself and to transcend itself. Without contradiction there would be no life, movement, growth or development. But contradiction is not everything. Nature does not stop

at contradiction, but strives to overcome it. Any two entities or processes are opposites with respect to each other, but not with respect to the unity or whole of which they form the parts.

The universe, itself, is a process of evolution, in which ends or purposes of universal reason are idealized. This is an organic and teleological conception. The complete organism is the realization of the purpose, form, notion or concept of the organism, or as Hegel would put it, the 'truth' of the organism. The important thing in the process of evolution is not the initial entity but the end product. The truth lies in the whole, but the whole is realized only in the completed process of evolution. Therefore, we may say that the Absolute is essentially a result, a fulfillment; but it must be emphasised that the result of a process as such is not the complete whole. The result together with the entire process of development is the true whole. The central thought of Hegel is that only the whole is real. By 'whole' is here meant the whole process leading to the final stage. The partial fact is only an abstraction, which needs to be brought into connection with the whole in order to gain

validity as concrete reality. In other words, Reality is not any particular stage of development, nor even the end of development as a finished result. It is the process of development itself in its entirety - the concrete universal.

For example,

The bud disappears in the blossoming of the flower and the flower in turn disappears in the forming of the fruit. Here one may say that in an ultimate sense, the bud is contradicted by the flower and the flower by the fruit. These different forms are not only distinguished, but they displace each other in a dialectical sequence which forms an organic unity. In this unity the different stages or forms, although conflicting, are necessary to each other; and this necessity first constitutes the life of the whole.<sup>7</sup>

The function of philosophy is to show how one stage evolves from the other and how it necessarily emerges from the other.

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7. Regert, A Students History of Philosophy, New York., P. 461.

### Dialectical Method:

Philosophy is a conceptual method as Kant had declared. But, Hegel maintains that we cannot exhaust reality by abstract concepts. Reality is a moving dynamic process, a dialectical process, which abstract concepts cannot capture fully. They can apprehend only a very small part of the total reality. Reality, full of constant change as it is, full of negations, contradictions and oppositions. For example, the plant germinates, blooms, withers and ultimately dies. Similarly, man passes from birth through childhood, youth, maturity and then old age, and finally death.

Hegel holds that all existence has truth only in the Idea. The idea pervades the whole and all the parts of the whole. All particles have their reality in this unity. The activity which sees things in their wholeness, or unifies the opposites, is a higher function of mind, which, however, cannot dispense with the intellect. The two functions such as speculative reason and abstract intellect, work simultaneously.

Therefore, thought will proceed from the most simple, abstract, and relatively empty concepts to the

more, complex, concrete, and richer ones, the 'notions'. This method is known as the dialectical method, which had already been discussed by Kant and also employed by Fichte and Schelling. Hegel distinguishes three stages in it. We begin with an abstract universal concept i.e. thesis; while this concept gives rise to a contradiction, i.e. antithesis; and finally the contradictory concepts are reconciled in a third concept which, therefore, is a union of the other two, i.e. Synthesis. For example, Parmenides held that being is permanent, Heraclitus believed that it is in constant change, while the atomists advocated that it is neither and yet both; that everything is permanent and yet changing. The new concepts, however, suggests new problems and contradictions, which must be resolved in other concepts. And so the dialectical process, which seeks to follow the evolution of reality, continues until we reach an ultimate notion in which all oppositions or contradictions are resolved and preserved. But no single concept, not even the highest, represents the the whole truth. All concepts are only partial truths. Truth or knowledge is constituted by the entire system of concepts in its development, everyone of which has evolved from a basal concept. Truth, like rational reality itself, is a living process.

Therefore, we can say that one thought follows necessarily from the other, One thought provokes a contradictory thought with which it is united to form another thought. The dialectical movement is the logical self-unfolding of thought. Hegel expresses thought from its own point of view and not as envisaged from outside. Finally, we may say that speculative or dialectical thinking is a process that seeks to do justice to moving, living, organic existence. It is a process in which the differences are reconciled, in which the distinctions are not merely made but comprehended too.

#### Thought and Being:

According to the romanticists, being is a flowing reality. They were also right in maintaining that being cannot be grasped by an abstracting intelligence which catches only abstract phases or partial aspects of being. Hegel, however, rejects the romanticists' claim that being can be realized by mystical feeling, or aesthetic intuitions. Being is a rational process, a process that has meaning. It is not an irrational flux, an unorganised and absolutely meaningless bliss, but an orderly evolution, a progress. Our attempts to split up reality into essence and appearance, inner and

outer, substance and attributes, force and its expression, the Infinite and the finite, mind and matter, God and world, gives nothing but false distinctions and arbitrary abstractions. The world does not consist of an inner Kernel and an outer shell; the essence is the appearance, the inner is the outer, the mind is the body, and God is the universe.

Reality is a process of logical evolution. It is a spiritual process, and we can understand it only in so far as we experience such a process within ourselves. There is a rational necessity in the structure of absolute thought which is reproduced in our individual thinking. Thinking evolves or develops rationally. It moves logically or dialectically. In this sense, it is universal, trans-empirical, transcendental, or as Hegel calls it, metaphysical.

Hegel claims that God or the Idea, meaning the potential universe, is the timeless totality of all the possibilities of evolution. This Idea in its realized form becomes spirit or mind (Geist). The Idea contains within itself, implicitly, ideally, all that unfolds in the actual world. The Idea is the creative reason. The study of creative



reason is logic. Hegel does not mean that God as pure thought or logical Idea existed before the creation of the world. According to him, the world was eternally created. The being of the divine mind consists in self-expression. God is the living and moving reason of the world. He reveals Himself in the world, in nature and also in history, which are necessary stages in the evolution of God toward self-consciousness. This evolution is a logical and not a temporal process. God is not absorbed into the world and vice-versa. Because in a significant sense, without the world even God is not God. Therefore, He cannot be without creating a world and also without knowing Himself in his Other. So there must be both unity and opposition in the Absolute. The finite world cannot exist without the Idea. It is not an independent thing and has no real being without God. Therefore, one might say that whatever truth it has it owes to God. Just as in our minds thoughts and feelings come and pass away without exhausting the mind, so the phenomena of nature come and go without exhausting the divine mind. Hence, the Idea, apart from its expressions in nature and history, exists not only 'in itself'; but considered in relation to its manifestations it exists also 'for itself'. Therefore, Hegel does not mean that God, or the logical Idea, exists as a self-conscious logical process before the creation of the world.

He cannot be conscious without a world. The characteristic Hegelian doctrine that the Absolute becomes self conscious only through something other than itself, i.e. the world or finite human minds, is known as the doctrine of reflection.

### Logic and Metaphysics:

For Hegel, logic is the fundamental science, since it reproduces the divine thought process as it is in itself. In the words of Albert Schwegler, "The logic of Hegel is the Scientific exposition and development of the pure notions of reason,— of those notions or categories which underlie all thought and all being, and which are as well the fundamental factors of subjective cognition, as the indwelling soul of objective reality,— of those ideas in which the spiritual and the natural have their point of coincidence".<sup>8</sup>

Hegel says that therealm of logic is truth as it is in its own self. It is the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of the world or of a single finite being. It is thus, no doubt, a realm of shadows, but these shadows are the simple ultimate principles, into whose illuminating net the entire universe is built.

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8. Albert Schwegler - Modern Philosophy, Tr. by J.H. Stirling Calcutta, 1982, p. 200.

Dialectical thought expresses the inner-most essence of the universal mind. In such thinking the universal mind knows, itself as it is. At this point, thought and being, Subject or object, form and content, are identical. The forms or categories of thought which logic evolves mirror the forms of reality. In the essence of things thought recognises its own essence.

Logic is the Science of pure thought and the other Sciences are applications of logic. In logical thinking, pure thought may be said to study itself, since thinker and thought are one; and in the process, the thinker evolves with his thinking. Hence, the philosophy of nature studies the Absolute, or universal reason. While the philosophy of mind shows how reason, after subjugating objective nature, returns to itself and thereby achieves self-consciousness.

In all instances of the revelation of reason, whether in nature or in mind, reason appears in an infinite variety of temporal and transitory forms. It is the business of philosophy to understand the reason in things, the essence or substance of nature and mind, the eternal harmony and order, the immanent law and essence of nature, the eternal element shining through the temporal and accidental, the inner impulse shaping external

forms. Moreover, this reason in things can be known only conceptually through dialectical or logical thought, and the only knowledge worthy of the name is a priori or philosophical knowledge. The two fields of metaphysics or 'applied logic' are Philosophy of nature and Philosophy of mind.

#### Philosophy of Nature:

According to Albert Schweigler, "Nature is the idea in the form of heterogeneity — the notion that has issued from its logical abstraction into real particularization, and that so, consequently, has become external to its own self. The unity of the notion, then has become concealed in nature; and, in assuming for problem the following up of intelligence as concealed in nature, or the self-development of nature into spirit, Philosophy must not forget that self externalization, sunderedness, out-of-itself-ness, constitutes the character of nature as such. Nature is a Bacchantic God, uncontrolled by, and unconscious of, himself".<sup>9</sup>

Logic deals with concepts. In the necessary evolution of our thinking it shows how one concept springs from another.

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9. Ibid., p. 209.

The system of concepts which we think in logic, forms an organic whole and represents the true essence of things. Logic is not a merely subjective process occurring in the human mind. It is rather a relational structure exemplified in the world process, in nature and in mind (in the individual mind) as well as the social mind, in the history of the world and in human institutions as well. In logic we envisage reason in its purity and in its nakedness. Hegel states that logic has no actual being, but becomes actualized only in the thinking processes of man. So , we are not concerned, in logic, with nature, history, or society, but with a system of truths, a world of ideas, as it is in itself.

We cannot truly say that the logical Idea passes over into nature. The logical Idea is itself nature or to express it differently, nature is a form of the logical idea. It is the Idea in spatialized and temporalized form. Albert Schweigler says, 'Its beginning, middle, and end are prescribed for the philosophy of nature. Its beginning is the first or immediate characteristic of nature the abstract Universality of its self-externality,— Space and Matter. Its end is the disimprisonment of spirit from nature, in the form of rational, conscious individuality,— Man'.<sup>10</sup>

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10. Ibid., p. 210.

It is the logical concept in its externality. Hegel calls it purified or unconscious intelligence. Nature is a stage of transition through which the logical idea passes in its evolution into mind or spirit. The Idea, which embodies itself or is externalized in nature, returns into itself and becomes mind or spirit. In mind the Idea reveals itself to itself.

#### Philosophy of Mind:

Mind or Spirit passes through dialectical stages of evolution, revealing itself as subjective mind, objective mind and finally Absolute Mind. Subjective mind expresses itself as soul (mind dependent on nature), consciousness (mind opposes to nature), and spirit (mind reconciled with nature in knowledge). Corresponding to these stages, Hegel has the Sciences of anthropology, phenomenology, and psychology. The Idea, or universal reason, becomes soul in the animal organism. It embodies itself, creates a body for itself, becomes a particular, individual soul, the function and vocation of which is to exercise its particular individuality. It is an unconscious production. According to Weber, "Man is essentially mind, i.e., consciousness and freedom. But on emerging from the hands of nature he is so only in principle. The mind, like nature, is subject to the law of development.

Consciousness and freedom do not exist at the dawn of individual organic life; they are the products of the evolution called history".<sup>11</sup>

Hegel dealt with the soul as a natural entity in the physical world. The soul as a sensitive, feeling being, and the soul as a being that can express itself and act upon the world through its body. The upright body, the hand, 'as the absolute tool', the mouth, and the power of weeping and laughing all enables man to express in nature to externalize his thoughts and feelings. Hegel discussed the next moment of subjective mind under the heading of the 'Phenomenology of mind'.

The third triad of subjective mind, called 'Psychology', basically contains descriptions of mental functions such as recollection, imagination, memory and thought etc., as well as descriptions of the practical drives, impulses, and strivings towards satisfaction.

Weber says, "The objective mind first manifests itself in the form of right, which is freedom conceded ."

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11. History of Philosophy - Alfred Weber, Tr. by Frank Thilly with Philosophy Since 1860, by Ralph Barton Parry, Delhi, 1987, p. 420.

and guaranteed to all. The individual who is recognised as free is a person. The personality realizes and asserts itself through property. Each legal persons has, by virtue of his free activity, the right to possess, and consequently, also the right to transfer his property. This transference takes place in the form of a contract. The contract is the state of embryo".<sup>12</sup>

Hegel, at the very end of his discussion of subjective mind, writes that the freedom which is the culmination of subjective mind is only a concept, a principle of mind and heart destined to develop into the objective phase, into legal, moral, religious, and scientific actuality. The triad that makes up the objective mind comprises law, subjective morality, and social morality. The first part covers legal rights and duties and is exemplified in property, contract and punishment. The second is concerned largely with the morality of intention and conscience. Finally, the third part is itself a triad. The first stage of social morality is the family, 'the natural or immediate phase', of objective mind. When members of the family have matured, they detach themselves from it and enter of the world/independent men who compete in an economic arena free from tribal allegiances. Hegel calls this phase of social life as 'civil society'.

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12. Ibid., pp. 420-21.



### Absolute Mind:

The triad which completes the Hegelian system is composed of art, revealed religion, and philosophy. According to Albert Schwegler, "Spirit is absolute, so far as it has returned from the sphere of objectivity into itself, into the ideality of cognition, into the perception of the absolute idea as the truth of all being. The subjugation of natural subjectivity by means of ethical and political observance is the path by which spirit ascends to this pure freedom, to the knowledge of its ideal substance as the absolute".<sup>13</sup>

At the end of the Phenomenology, Hegel proceeds from the religion of nature to the religion of art and then to the philosophical knowledge of the history of the world. The Supreme stage in the evolution of the logical Idea is the Absolute Mind, whose sole purpose and work consist in making manifest to itself its own nature, and which is, therefore, free and unlimited spirit. Every particular subject as a truly knowing subject is such an absolute subject. The Absolute Mind similarly passes through three stages expressing itself in art, religion, and philosophy. The first stage of the absolute spirit is Art, the immediate

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13. Albert Schwegler - Modern Philosophy , pp. 219-20.

view of the idea in objective actuality; the second, Religion, the certainty of the idea as what is above all immediate reality, as the absolute power of being, predominant over all that is individual and finite. The third and final stage of absolute mind is Philosophy which is the unity of the first two, is the knowing of the idea as the absolute which is pure thought. The Absolute Mind expresses its essence of truth in the form of intuition in art, in the form of presentation or imagination in religion, and in the form of conception or the pure logical concept in Philosophy. The mind perceiving its inner essence in perfect freedom is art, the mind imaging it reverently in religion, and the mind conceiving and knowing it in thought is philosophy. Further, one may say that philosophy too has no other object than God and is, therefore, essentially rational theology as well as an enduring worship of God in the service of truth. Finally, each of the three forms realizes itself in the dialectical process of evolution and has its own history, i.e., the history of art, the history of religion, and the history of philosophy.

In the history of philosophy every great system has its necessary place and represents a necessary stage of logical development. Each system provokes an opposing one;

the contradiction is reconciled in a higher synthesis, which, in turn, gives rise to new conflicts, and the dialectic continues until it reaches its culmination in Hegel himself. The Hegelian Philosophy represents its final synthesis in which the Absolute Mind becomes conscious of itself. It recognises the content of its being in the historical development through which it has passed.

## C H A P T E R - I I

### PREJUDICES REGARDING HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY

#### (a) Reaction to Hegelian Philosophy by the Neo-Positivists etc.

Hegelian Philosophy generated extreme reactions in certain quarters and gave rise to reactionary movements, the most extreme of which rejected all metaphysics as a useless undertaking. The new German movement's every phase was subjected to attack, such as its Pantheism, its idealism, its rationalism, and its a priori methods. Some thinkers insisted on more exact scientific methods, and by their application reached results at variance with the new philosophy. Realism, pluralism and positivism represented the scientific reaction to idealism. Others refused to accept the view that the world was rational. They sought answers to the world-riddle in functions of the mind other than reason. The greatest opponents of the so-called speculative Philosophy are Herbert Spencer, Schopenhauer, Ernest Mach, Poincaré etc.

Positivists and neo-positivists both strongly criticised and rejected the Hegelian Philosophy. The term "Positivism" was used first by Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon to designate scientific method and its extension to philosophy. Adopted by Auguste Comte, it came to designate an influential philosophical movement which, in the second half of the

nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, was powerful in most parts of the western world.<sup>1</sup>

The central thesis of positivism is that Science is the paradigm of valid or true knowledge and facts are the only possible objects of knowledge. According to positivism, the task of philosophy is to find the general principles common to all the sciences and to use these principles as guides to human conduct and as the basis of social organisation. This position naturally implied the view that Philosophy does not possess a method distinct from that of Science. Consequently, positivism not only denies the existence of intelligibility of forces or entities beyond facts and the laws ascertained by Science but is opposed to any kind of metaphysics and any procedure of investigation that is not reducible to a variation of scientific method.

Even though the principal philosophical sources of positivism are the works of the English empiricists and the Philosophers of the Enlightenment, the cultural climate that nurtured it can be said to be that of the eighteenth century

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1. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. 6 (New York: The Macmillan Co. 1967), p. 414.

industrial revolution and the optimism generated by the first successes of industrial technology, positivism crystallized this climate into a philosophical programme. However, unlike contemporary positivism it exalted Science without concerning itself with the conditions and the limits of the validity of Science, and claimed that not only ethics and politics but also religion should be amenable to scientific method.

Roughly, there are two kinds of positivism, i.e. Social positivism, with a professedly practico-political character, and Evolutionary positivism, with a professedly theoretical character. Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill are the principal representatives of Social positivism, while Herbert Spencer represents Evolutionary positivism. There is third, critical type of positivism, also known as empiriocriticism, which is distinct from both Social and Evolutionary positivism. Contemporary forms of positivism i.e. logical positivism and neo-positivism. can be said to be methodological offshoots of critical positivism which assumed a more rigorous form through the work of Ernst Mach and Richard Avenarius. This movement was the immediate historical antecedent of the Vienna circle and of neo-positivism in general.

As is well known, in Hegelianism, logic is the fundamental Science, since it reproduces the divine thought-

process as it is in itself. Dialectical thought expresses the innermost essence of the universal mind. The forms <sup>of thought</sup> or categories/ which logic evolves are identical with the forms of reality. They have both logical and ontological or metaphysical value.<sup>2</sup>

In stark contrast to this stand, the restriction of necessity to the domain of logic, and the consequent reduction of natural laws to empirical propositions, which are the characteristics of the neo-positivism of early Wittgenstein, Carnap and Hans Reichenbach.

However, it was Bertrand Russell & G.E. Moore, who were the two early pioneers of contemporary analysis who, as fellow students at Cambridge University in the 1890s, reacted to Neo-Hegelianism which was the dominant philosophic tradition in England and America at that time, <sup>and</sup> developed ideas which took British philosophy to the extreme of a total distrust of all speculative philosophy. It must be remembered that Neo-Hegelian Idealism was speculative metaphysics in the grand style. It attempted to present a complete world-view which would describe the nature of Reality, and the ultimate relation of Man and his values to Reality. Idealism, as it flourished in the late nineteenth century, was the culmination

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2. Frank Thilly, A History of Philosophy, (Allahabad: Central Publishing House, 1985), p. 484.



of centuries of metaphysical thought which had begun more than two thousand years ago with the speculations of Thales.<sup>3</sup>

Moore, was dissatisfied with Idealism, concentrated his critical attack upon the meanings of the metaphysical propositions advanced by the Idealists. Two of Moore's most valuable tools in this attack upon Idealism were his refusal to deviate from 'common sense' and his repeated appeal to the ordinary meanings of words. Moore attacked one of the most basic of the Idealist's principles, i.e., the doctrine of the Internality of Relations. For a number of reasons the major Idealists had held that all relations are internal, that is, that a thing is what it is because of its relations and that if its relations change, it becomes a different things. In other words, no relation is a mere 'accidental' or external relation of an individual. Moore rejected this doctrine On the simple grounds that it flies in the face of common sense.

On the other hand, Russell also rejected Idealism, although for different reasons. Russell's earliest writings were in the areas of logic and mathematics. Together with

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3. Robert R. Ammerman, Classics of Analytic Philosophy, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1965), pp. 2-3.

A.N. Whitehead (1861 - 1947) he published the monumental Principia Mathematica, in 1910. Russell himself wrote that "... logic is what is fundamental in philosophy, and ... schools should be characterized rather by their logic than by their metaphysics". Throughout his career in which he uphold different views at different points, Russell did not deviate from his basic attempt to bring to bear the results of his logical studies upon the traditional problems of metaphysics.

However, the basis of his rejection of Idealism was substantially different from that of Moore. This difference is best brought out by citing Russell's reasons for rejecting the doctrine of the Internality of Relations. One of Russell's main argument was that the doctrine must be false because of its consequences for mathematics. He argued that if all relations are internal, then the Idealists are quite right in saying that ultimate Reality is One and there is only One truth. But Russell says that the propositions of mathematics are not even partial truths, which is an unacceptable consequence. Russell concludes that the doctrine of the Internality of Relations is false and the metaphysical views that are deduced from it are fundamentally mistaken.

According to Russell, the Idealist error is at bottom a logical error. They failed to see that not all meaningful propositions are of the subject-predicate form. An adequate logic must include an independent logic of relations as well as a logic of predication. In other words, the metaphysical questions such as the nature of relations were to be settled primarily in terms of mathematical and logical considerations.

Russell and Moore succeeded in bringing to an end the dominance of Idealism in British Philosophy. However, despite their rejection of Idealism, neither Moore nor Russell seriously doubted neither the pertinence of metaphysical problems nor the possibility of solving them through some or other philosophical, logical tools. Both of them continued to believe that metaphysical truth is not only possible, but each believed himself to have arrived at some fairly plausible version of it. Their main dissatisfaction concerned the ways used in the past by philosophers to resolve metaphysical questions. For them, analysis was primarily a tool to be used to sharpen and clarify philosophical problems so that they could be solved easily and unambiguously.

It was Ludwig Wittgenstein, who, building upon the work of Russell and to a lesser extent Moore, was the first

to argue the more extreme thesis that metaphysical questions are unanswerable. In his book Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921), Wittgenstein argued the real difficulty with metaphysical problems is not that philosophers have failed to find adequate ways of solving them, but rather that they are not questions at all. They fail to fulfill the minimal conditions of meaningfulness. According to him, all meaningful discourse is empirical in nature, and metaphysics not being empirical, is essentially meaningless. The propositions of mathematics and logic, on the other hand, are necessarily true because they are tautologous. But the sentences of metaphysicians do not enjoy this status either since they claim to refer to reality.

Wittgenstein held that philosophy is primarily the activity of clarifying the puzzlements or perplexities arising from the complexity of language. The task of philosophers is to show the way out of the puzzlement.

One of the most influential movements in recent philosophy whose origin can be traced back to a reaction against speculative philosophy<sup>is</sup>/logical positivism. It originated in 'the Vienna circle' in the early twenties and had affinities with the skeptical empiricism of David Hume

and the Scientific Conventionalism of Mach and Poincare. The logical positivists thought of themselves as continuing a nineteenth-century Viennese empirical tradition, closely linked with British empiricism and culminating in the anti-metaphysical, scientifically oriented teachings of Ernst Mach. Moritz Schlick (1882-1936), was the central figure of the school, while Rudolf Carnap (1891 - ), Otto Neurath, Friedrich Waismann, Herbert Feigl, Philipp Frank, etc., were the active members, with a common deep disillusionment with the state of continental philosophy and a distrust of all the metaphysical approaches prevalent at that time, and a rather exaggerated respect for the achievements of science. The central core of logical positivism is the insistence on the employment of verifiability as the criterion of meaning. The verifiability principle in its strongest form requires that a statement, if it is to be meaningful, should admit of verification or falsification by direct confrontation with experience. The logical positivists investigated the formal or a priori aspects of knowledge as well as the empirical or a posteriori aspects, and rejecting Kant's claim of the validity of synthetic a priori knowledge, insisted with Leibniz that the a priori is always analytic.

It was the strong and rather polemical contention of positivism that all metaphysical sentences without exception

are meaningless. The positivists agreed with Wittgenstein that metaphysical questions are pseudo-questions and therefore unanswerable. One of the important personalities of positivism, Rudolf Carnap, defined metaphysical propositions as those propositions, which claim to represent knowledge about something which is over or beyond all experience. The positivists maintained that what cannot be experienced, even in principle, cannot be known or even spoken about in meaningful language.

A.J. Ayer, the most famous logical positivist of England stated, in his book Language, Truth and Logic (1936), the conception of positivism with uncompromising clarity and zeal. Ayer had placed great emphasis upon a rigorous version of "The principle of verification". According to this versions of the principle, a sentence cannot be deemed literally meaningful unless it satisfies certain specified conditions. Ayer argued that metaphysical sentences failed to meet those conditions and could therefore be shown to be meaningless.<sup>4</sup>

As far as Hegel is concerned, he built his philosophy on the foundations laid by Fichte and Schelling. Both Fichte and Schelling employed the logical method. They

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4. Ibid., p. 8.

advocated that mind is the principle of knowledge, and all philosophy is ultimately a philosophy of mind as well. For Hegel, too, nature and mind or reason, both are one, yet he subordinates nature to reason. For Hegel, the identity of being and reason is a fundamental philosophical premise. He emphasises that the same process that is at work in reason, is present everywhere. In the words that have become famous, 'whatever is real is rational, and whatever is rational is real'.

In contrast to the Hegelian philosophy, the neo-positivists rejected the logical method as well as the concept of reason or mind as used by Hegel. They believed that the reason by itself is incapable of revealing matters of fact.

According to Hegel, it is the business of philosophy to know the world of nature and of human experience, to study and comprehend the reason in inherent things, not, their superficial, transitory and accidental forms, but their eternal essence, harmony and law. Things have a meaning and the processes in the world are rational. Since reality is at bottom a rational, necessary, logical process, it can be known only by thought. And since the function of philosophy

will be to understand the laws or necessary forms by which reason operates, logic and metaphysics are two aspects of the same enterprise.

Hegel believed that Being is a rational process, a process that has meaning and must be thought. It is not an irrational flux, an unorganised, absolutely meaningless happening, but an orderly evolution, a progress. Reality is a process of logical evolution. It is a spiritual process, and we can understand it only in so far as we experience such a process within ourselves. There is a rational necessity in the structure of absolute thought which is reproduced in our individual thinking. Thinking evolves or develops rationally. It moves logically or dialectically. In this sense, it is universal, trans-empirical, transcendental, or as Hegel called it metaphysical.<sup>5</sup>

Hegel calls God the Idea, meaning the potential universe, the timeless totality of all the possibilities of evolution. Spirit or mind (Geist) is this Idea in its realized state. Hegel declares that the world was eternally created. The being of the divine mind consists of self-expression. God is the living and moving reason of the world. He reveals

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5. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 482.



himself in the world, in nature and history , which are necessary stages in the evolution of God towards Self-consciousness. This evolution is a logical but not a temporal process. God is not absorbed into the world nor the world into God. Hegel says that without the world God is not God. He cannot be without creating the world and without knowing himself in his other. There must be both unity and opposition in the Absolute.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to Hegelianism, the neo-positivists or logical positivists as pointed out above set aside all philosophical questions whether of Metaphysics, Ethics or Epistemology as totally irrelevant to man's understanding of reality. According to Carnap, philosophy had to be destroyed not renovated. The logical positivists thought of themselves as extending the range of Science over the whole area of systematic truth and as needing for that purpose to destroy the claim of idealist philosophers to have a special kind of supra-scientific access to truth.

In general, the neo-positivists explained, when they said that philosophical assertions were meaningless,

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6. Ibid., p. 483.

they meant only that they lacked "cognitive meaning". Ethical and metaphysical assertions have emotional associations. This distinguishes them from mere jumbles of word.

Finally, as far as Hegel's theory is concerned, we can say that his own philosophy does not satisfy his own requirements of any system of thought. According to him, his philosophy is no less than a synthesis of all philosophies and is, therefore, perfect, but this is a notion privately held and a notion for which there is hardly any kind of justification.

(b) Misunderstandings regarding Hegel's way of Philosophy:

In this chapter we will attempt a brief and rounded account of Hegel's Philosophical doctrine, and try to relate it to the ideas and language of our own time. This will also helps us to find our way through the tortuous labyrinths of Hegel's philosophy, which have been the despair of many a sympathetic commentator. Hegel's writings are at once so unique in their language, and so singular in their mode of argument, that it is extremely difficult to represent them at all accurately in a brief fashion. <sup>However,</sup> Our concern will neither be with those who have commented on Hegel nor with those who have been much influenced by his teaching, but with the actual writings themselves and to those philosophers who have misconceived Hegel's way of philosophising.

There are several reasons why such a general restatement and reassessment of Hegel should be attempted. It would be worth doing if only on account of the vastness of Hegel's influence even on the wave fronts of contemporary European thought. It is worth while sketching and sizing up a system which has provoked so huge a literature, which has been so variously interpreted and criticized, and which has given birth to so many movements and counter movements ever

since it was propounded. Even the Anglo-Saxon world did not remain free from the spell of Hegel during the last half of the previous century, and the first quarter of the present one. It produced several highly original thinkers, e.g., Bradley in England and Royce in America, who owed much of their inspiration to Hegel, much of the first quarter of this century saw the English speaking world of philosophy busy in disowning and abandoning Hegelian positions that had been previously held. Now it is possible to examine and evaluate Hegel with the detached appreciation possible in the case of other great philosophers. Hegel has also an immense, although somewhat inverse influence on continental thought through the reaction he inspired in the 'willfully narrow, passionately perverse, religious soul of the mid-century, Dane Kierkegaard, whose views, despite their appearance of being the very antithesis of Hegel's ideas, are so essentially Hegelian in basic approach that they might have come straight from one of Hegel's own phenomenological studies. Further, the similarities and differences between Hegel's system and the Indian philosophical systems have prompted some very illuminating work whose significance goes far beyond mere comparative study.

The complex relation of Hegel's ideas to the ideas of Karl Marx, and the influence that Hegel has exercised

through Marxism in various ways is too well known to be dwelt upon at length. We are not maintaining that Hegel deserves a reassessment and restatement merely on account of his influence on later thinkers. Hegel deserves a reassessment because, he has been one of those thinkers who inspire extreme reactions and is therefore likely to be misinterpreted and misunderstood by followers as much as by detractors; and it is important to gain a balance of perspective over such a thinker in order to appreciate his contribution to civilised thought. Here we shall confine ourselves to preparing the way for an understanding of Hegel by mentioning the deep-rooted misconceptions, prevailing today.

First of all, the popular label of Hegel, as a transcendent metaphysician, is itself misconceived. A transcendent metaphysician is one who deals with objects or matters which lie beyond our empirical knowledge. But in this sense Hegel was certainly not a transcendent metaphysician. Further, Hegel is rather vaguely accused of being some sort of subjectivist. A subjectivist is one who thinks the realm of nature or history exists only in or for someone's consciousness, whether this be the consciousness of a mind like ours, or of some cosmic or super cosmic mind.

This charge again is wide of the mark as far as Hegel is concerned. Likewise, the stronger charge that Hegel thought that our mind (or the mind of God) made up the world in some witting or unwitting fashion also bear close scrutiny. Further, the image of Hegel as some sort of manic rationalist, one who seeks to deduce or to foresee the detail of nature and experience from the abstract demands of certain notions, who tries to do a priori what we now hold can only be done a posteriori bears very little resemblance to the real Hegel.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, Hegel has been accused of being a thoroughgoing political reactionary, who was somehow responsible for the brutalities of Hitlerism. A close examination reveals this charge to be misdirected as the next.

As regards the view of Hegel as a transcendent metaphysician — one who speaks of matters lying beyond the bounds of possible experience, or who welds the data of our experience into a whole going for beyond what any mind can embrace — the best corrective is to simply glance at the contents of Hegel's two systematic works, "The Phenomenology of Spirit" and the "Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences". Both works start with what is 'immediate', and as removed from what is ultimate and 'absolute'—as is

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7. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 19.

philosophically possible. The former starts with the direct certainties of the sense-experience, the latter with the abstract notion of 'being' — both works likewise end up with what is 'absolute', the former with the 'Absolute knowing' of philosophy, the latter with the three forms of 'Absolute spirit', Art, Religion and Philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

A closer examination reveals the fact that according to Hegel, the Absolute is that which is entirely present and on hand and actual, and not something over and above things or behind them. The Hegelian Absolute is neither understood in a supermundane consciousness nor in a timeless comprehensive vision, but in the creative activities and products of the artists, and the faith and worship of the religious person. Hegel does sometimes make use of the transcendent language of religion, as well as 'the Idea', the abstract principle of consciousness, as existing like God before the creation of nature and finite spirit. But this has little to do with transcendent metaphysics.

It is in the Anglo-Saxon world that the maximum number of misconceptions about Hegel prevail. They owe their origin to a confusion between the doctrines of those who

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8. Ibid., p. 20.

learnt from Hegel (or only half succeeded in leaving from him), and the doctrine of Hegel himself. For example, "it was Bradley, not Hegel, who believed in some Absolute Experience within which the objects of our ordinary human experience would be unbelievably fused and transformed, in which ordinary categories would be done away with without being replaced by anything that we can hope to understand, and concerning which we certainly do not have the 'Absolute knowing', whereas Hegel thinks that not only do we have knowledge of the Absolute, but in fact, for him it is identical with the Absolute's own knowledge of itself. To take another example, it was McTaggart, not Hegel, who made the Absolute into a timeless fellowship of spirits, curiously but not incorrigibly deceived into seeing themselves and their own activities as in time".<sup>9</sup> The un-Hegelian character of these systems is also shown by their imperfect use of Hegel's dialectical methods. They make use of contradictions to abolish the world of appearance and the notions of ordinary life, and then pass over to a realm of truth and reality. However, in Hegel, the apparent and false do not dissolve in the solvent of dialectic, but are retained in his final result, whose content is no more than the clear understanding of the process which has led up to that result itself. These systems are likewise

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9. Ibid., p. 21.



differentiated from Hegel's by their doctrine of an unlimited 'coherence', of 'internal relations' between each thing and everything else. As opposed to this Hegel accords a proportionate place to unresolved contingency on the surface of nature, and to indeterminacy in the whims of the will; References to the 'Universe', the 'whole', are as rare in Hegel as they are rampant in the philosophies of Bradley and McTaggart etc. Therefore, it is only fair that we do not count Hegel among them, but condemn or praise him for his own doctrines, and not for those of others.

After having dealt with the 'metaphysical charge' against Hegel, now we can proceed to consider the 'Subjectivist charge'. In the first place, Hegel is no idealist in the sense of holding that 'to be is to be perceived', or that to be is to be conceived, or that objects exist only if there are conscious minds to consider them or to refer to them. Even less is he an idealist in the sense of thinking that the mind imposes its forms on the material of sense, or that it 'constructs' the world in its imagination or thought'.<sup>10</sup> We can attribute such subjectivism to Kant but not to Hegel.

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10. Ibid., p. 22.

In fact, one might go so far as saying that from this point of view the main merit of Hegel lay precisely in thoroughly settling the 'transcendental object' or 'thing-in-itself' of Kant, the thing as it exists apart from thought or consciousness. For the dualistic Kantian idealism, which opposes things as they exist for consciousness to things as they exist in themselves. Hegel substituted an 'objective idealism', according to which things have no real being except such as they have in relation to the thinking mind. The "Philosophy of Nature" shows further that Hegel believed in the existence of natural objects before the arrival of life and consciousness in the world. While in the "Philosophy of Spirit" he makes it clear that time and space are the forms of external things, and not only the forms through which the mind views them. Now it is clear that for Hegel, conscious spiritual beings are the last beings of the world, and that 'Absolute Spirit', as manifest in the highest forms of art, religion and philosophy, is the last stage to be reached in their experience.

If we call Hegel an idealist we must call him one in a thoroughly new sense of word : he employs throughout the Aristotelian notion of teleology or final causation, and he holds Mind or Spirit to be the final form, the goal or 'truth' of all our notions and the world.<sup>11</sup> Hegel's

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11. Ibid., p. 23.

thoroughgoing teleology means that nothing whatever in the world or our thought can have any meaning or function except to serve as a condition for the activities of self-conscious spirit. In distinguishing Hegel's teleological idealism from other forms of subjective or objective idealism, our aim is not to criticise the latter, but only to point out that the elaborate fallacies which realist criticism has found in such forms of idealism must not be attributed to Hegel, who was not an idealist in that sense. Karl Marx found it necessary to invert Hegel, in order to transform his 'idealism' into Marxist 'materialism'. However, there is as much materialism in Hegel as in Marx, since matter is for him surely a stage in the 'Idea'.

After having disposed of the 'subjectivist charge' against Hegel, now, we may deal with the view of him as a dogmatic apriorist, i.e., one who sought to deduce the detail of history and nature from the relationships of abstract concepts.

Hegel believed in a systematic Science (Wissenschaft) in which all concepts could be linked together in a continuous chain. But the important point to be noted is that the rules

of this 'Systematic Science' are far from being deductive in the sense in which the rules of a syllogism or a mathematical calculus are deductive. They are rather precepts which urge us to pass from notions in which some principle is latent, to other notions in which the same principle will become manifest. Hegel sometimes 'sides' with one Scientific theory against another, as he consistently supports Kepler and Goethe against Newton. But in this, Hegel's Philosophical aim is not to do the work of history or science, nor to add to their results, but to frame concepts in terms of which these results can be philosophically grasped. Hegel's genuine empiricism and freedom from a priori presupposition is, however much more definite than that of a philosopher like Herbert Spencer, whose "First Principle" attempts to prove much more rigorously several points about the physical universe than Hegel.<sup>12</sup>

If Hegel is not to be regarded as a rationalist gone mad, he is also not to be regarded as a dishonest reasoner. Hegel writes, 'For the reality in itself, the general outcome of the relation of the Understanding to the inner nature of things, is the distinguishing of what cannot be distinguished, or is the unity of what is distinguished. This unity is, however,

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12. Ibid., pp. 23-4.

as we saw, just as much the recoil from itself, and this conception breaks as under into the opposition of self-consciousness and life: the former is the unity for which the absolute unity of difference exists, the latter, however, is only this unity itself, so that the unity is at the same time for itself.<sup>13</sup> Here it is of course hard to maintain that Hegel's use of language is in every way defensible. However, it is less indefensible than is usually supposed. Hegel, explores notions from a peculiar angle, to see them as embodying half-formed tendencies, sometimes conflicting, which other notions will bring out into the open; and to explore such relations among notions certainly requires the employment of a new vocabulary. For example, if we wish to say that the notion of mechanism involves a covert mutual fittingness among interacting objects, which is brought out in a chemical or a teleological relation, we are talking of a relation among notions for which no brief expression is appropriate. Therefore, Hegel is within his rights in resorting to metaphor. And since the relations dealt with are relations of tendency, which would be misdescribed if given a false clarity of outline, Hegel is justified in using metaphors

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13. G.W.F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, tr. by J.B. Baillie, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1955), p. 142.

which are deliberately ambiguous with shifting shades of meaning. This is not to say that such a procedure excuses all Hegel's obscurities.<sup>14</sup>

As regards the contradictory elements in Hegel's language, it must be remembered that the test of self-contradiction does not lie in the mere combination of an expression with its verbal negative—to say 'It is and it isn't' need not be non-sense at all. It lies solely in the use to which such a combination is put, i.e. if a man really wants to take back what he has just put forward, so as to leave nothing standing. Religious discourse has in all ages said important things in superficially contradictory language. Moreover, contradictions must arise in developing tendencies latent in ordinary speech, or in combining various forms of discourse. To recognise such contradictions is in a sense to have gone beyond them, or to have laid the foundation for new accommodations.

It is debatable whether it is relevant, in discussing the views of a philosophical thinkers, to enter into the 'progressive' or 'reactionary' character of his political opinions. But <sup>because the supposedly</sup> 'reactionary' character of Hegel's views has

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14. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 25.

encouraged/<sup>a</sup>conspiracy of neglect against his philosophy, the issue needs to be discussed. Hegel used to be regarded as a forebear of 'Prussianism', and is now thought by some to have been a forebear of National Socialism. It may be said that Hegel's political view are much more balanced and many-sided and he explicitly maintained that an unbounded respect for persons, over<sup>^</sup>riding all racial, credal and other differences, should be the foundation of the state, a belief of which Hitler's Fascism represents the direct negation.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, we may say that Hegel is worth reassessing and restating on account of the great contemporary relevance of many aspects of his thought. A great philosopher has a side to show to every age. If the German Romantic period valued him for one set of virtues, and the Victorian and Edwardian ages for another, our present period may also find something congenial and useful in his doctrine. Our ideas of time, of knowledge, of matter, of being, etc. are all poised, as it were, in unstable equilibrium, and the fragile push given by unusual examples will suffice to set them rolling. That our ideas and verbal usages are 'dialectical'

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15. Ibid., p. 26.

in this manner is certainly something of which contemporary thought is aware. Hegel ~~too~~ shares with contemporary thought, the view that it is our tendency to develop thought and language in one sided ways, to exaggerate and to fix tendencies implicit in current usage, which gives rise to philosophical puzzles and contradictions. While the modern thought attributes this freezing, exaggerating action to the misunderstanding by philosophers of the fluid forms of our language, Hegel assigns it to the 'understanding', the faculty of 'hard-and-fast' abstract thought, which he opposes to 'Reason', the more fluid and accommodating thought-faculty.<sup>16</sup> Wittgenstein says: 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our understanding through the instruments of our speech'. Hegel says in remarkably similar language: 'The battle of Reason consists in this, to overcome the rigidity which the Understanding has brought in.'<sup>17</sup> Both thinkers believed in a 'transfigured ordinariness' of thought and speech into which philosophical exaggerations will have to retreat. For Wittgenstein Philosophical exaggerations disappear in this final ordinariness, and need not, except for a confusion, have

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16. Ibid., p. 27.

17. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, I, 109; Hegel, L. Logic, p. 107, (W., p. 67), cited from Hegel: A Re-examination, by J.N. Findlay, p. 27.



emerged at all, while for Hegel their emergence is essential to the final result, and is in some sense 'preserved' in it. Hegel is also close to contemporary thought in the great stress which he lays on the unity of thought and language, as well as in the stress that he lays on the profound 'Wisdom' or intelligence inherent in ordinary usage, which sometimes prevents us from uttering some piece of philosophical nonsense to which we should otherwise feel inclined.

One may conclude by saying that despite the many and forceful reaction against his system of thought Hegel continues to occupy a significant place among the greatest thinkers of the world, and a study of his thought is certainly not unrewarding.

C H A P T E R - I I I

### APPROACH TO THE HEGALIAN SYSTEM

#### (a) Kant's Philosophy as a point of Departure:

Kant (1724-1804) began his philosophical career as a rationalist of the Wolffian School, but he soon saw its inadequacy. According to it, we can begin with innate ideas, but how can we say that they are also true of the external world? After rejecting rationalism, he began to look upon experience to explain knowledge. However, he was roused from his dogmatic slumber by the Sceptical writings of Hume. At last he was dissatisfied with both rationalism and empiricism. By his criticism of empiricism and rationalism, Kant demonstrated that both are one sided and true only in a limited sense and that we can explain the process of knowledge by a synthesis of the two. In the words of H.E. Cushman, "To Kant both empiricism and rationalism were dogmatic, the one because it assumed the validity of sensation, the other because it assumed the existence of innate ideas".<sup>1</sup> These two major themes persisted in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant summarized, in his own words, as the "Starry Heavens above and moral law within".<sup>2</sup>

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1. H.E. Cushman, A Beginners History of Philosophy, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston (1920), p. 24.
  2. A History of Philosophical System ed. by Vergilins Ferm, Chap. 22, p. 290.

Kant's problem was "to limit Hume's skepticism on the one hand, and the old dogmatism on the other, and to refute and destroy materialism, fatalism, atheism, as well as sentimentalism and superstition".<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, his problem was to find out the conditions which would make knowledge possible. According to Kant, genuine knowledge is universal and necessary knowledge. He agrees with the rationalists that there is such knowledge in mathematics and physics. A speculative or rational metaphysics is impossible. He also agrees with the empiricists that we can know only what we can experience, that sensation provides the matter of our knowledge. He agrees with the rationalists that universal and necessary truth cannot be derived from experience. Kant says that the senses furnish the materials of our knowledge, and the mind arranges them in ways made necessary by its own nature. Hence, we have universal and necessary knowledge of the order of ideas, though not of things-in-themselves. The contents of our knowledge are derived from experience, but the mind thinks its experiences, conceives them according to its native a priori, that is, rational. Kant agrees with this conclusion of Hume that we cannot know the things-in-themselves

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3. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 413.

because they are beyond our experience. We can think them, but not know them as we know the facts of the empirical world. Thus according to Kant our knowledge is confined to phenomena. Like Berkeley and Hume, Kant believes the world to be phenomenal. This phenomenal world is the object of our knowledge. So the basic question for Kant is the problem of knowledge. He was in search of the nature and origin of knowledge. What is knowledge? How is it possible? What are the boundaries of human reason? In order to answer these questions, we must examine human reason. Knowledge always appears in the form of judgements in which something is affirmed or denied. But we can not say that every judgment is knowledge.<sup>4</sup> There are two kinds of judgements viz. analytic and synthetic judgements. In an analytic judgement the predicate term is already contained in the subject term, e.g. Body is an extended thing. However, if it is to become a knowledge, a judgment must be synthetic. In a synthetic judgement, we must add something to the predicate, extend our knowledge, not merely elucidate it. For example, All bodies have specific gravity. But it is not necessary that all synthetic judgements give us genuine knowledge. There are some which are derived from experience. Therefore, we may say

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4. Ibid., p. 414.

that such judgements are lacking in necessity. Reason does not compel their acceptance, as it compels the acceptance of a mathematical proposition. Again, we may also say that they are lacking in universality. Judgements lacking in universality and necessity, or a posteriori judgements, are not scientific. To be knowledge, a synthetic judgement must be necessary, and it must be universal too. Universality and necessity have their source not in sensation or perception, but in reason or in the understanding itself. We know without experience or we may say prior to it that the sum of the angles of a triangle must be equal to two right angles that it will always be so.<sup>5</sup>

According to rationalism, there is a universal faculty of reason by virtue of which each individual has certain innate ideas. Knowledge proper, according to it, is exclusively constituted of such ideas. This theory explains universality and necessity as Kant says. All men have the same innate ideas because of their possessing a common faculty of reason. Therefore, being constituted of them cognitive propositions must be the same for all men. Again, all persons cannot but perceive the truth as their rational faculty directs them. Hence, cognitive propositions constituted by innate ideas

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5. Ibid., p. 415.

must be necessary as a result of inner compulsion.<sup>6</sup>

But as far as rationalism is concerned, it lies in another direction. Innate ideas are subjective, being in the mind of human knowers. Here the question arises that what is the guarantee that they will also be true of facts? Here Descartes and Leibnitz have given their views. According to Descartes, God's truth is the ultimate guarantee for the factual truth of clear and distinct ideas. It is quite evident that clear and distinct ideas by themselves do not explain their factual guarantee. This is evident with regard to Descartes' explanation of our knowledge of the external world. But if clearness and distinctness of ideas by themselves cannot explain factual propositions, then the magic term 'God' cannot do this miracle. Similarly like Descartes, Leibnitz too believes that all ideas are innate. Therefore, he has to answer the question concerning their factuality. Here he takes recourse to the doctrine of pre-established Harmony. According to Leibnitz, God has so created the monads that the order and development in one is reflected in those of all other monads. Therefore, the doctrine of pre-established harmony is an

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6. Y. Masih, A Critical History of Modern Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1983), p. 195.

a priori assumption, which cannot explain actual states of affairs. So that the doctrine of pre-established harmony remains an unverifiable as well as fictional explanation of proper knowledge. According to Y, Masih, "There is yet another difficulty of rationalism. Rationalism starts from certain clear and distinct concepts and proceeds to other ideas systematically and gradually as a result of deductions from them. Thus, Descartes started with a definition of substance as that which is in itself and conceived through itself without depending on anything else for its existence. Of course, Descartes inconsistently enough had accepted the reality of mind and body as two relative substances. Spinoza tried to correct this inconsistency of Descartes. Spinoza through his rigorous logic concluded that there could be only one substance. Other things of our daily experience, including the thinker himself, according to Spinoza, are mere modes 'which never are'. Leibnitz saw this inconsistency of Spinoza. He therefore began with the plurality of monads. His difficulty lay in not reaching any unity in plurality."<sup>7</sup>

Thus, rationality has given rise to the two contrasted systems of Spinoza and Leibnitz. Both of them have the same

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7. Ibid., p. 196.



starting point, namely, a self-evident definition of substance as appeared to them. Yet their conclusions taken singly are highly unsatisfactory, and, taken together are mutually contradictory. Therefore, the chief crux of the review is that reason, unaided by experience, can build castle in the air only. Therefore, Kant rejected rationalism on the ground that it dealt with airy structures without correspondence with facts.

The problem before Kant was to show how and why we can have genuine knowledge. To answer these questions, we must examine the organ of knowledge. We must consider its powers, its functions, its possibilities, and its limitations as well. According to Kant, rationalism and empiricism both had failed to explain knowledge because both of them were based on a common assumption concerning the status of objects. According to both of them, things as objects of knowledge exist external to the mind. Knowledge presupposes a mind. We cannot think without having something to think about, and we can have no object of thought unless it is given through the senses, unless the mind is receptive or has sensibility. Sensibility furnishes us with the sense qualities which are constituents of perceptual objects. These perceptual objects must also be thought, understood, or conceived by the understanding. Whenever

we perceive any object we perceive it in a particular space and time. In the absence of this space-time, nothing can be perceived. Therefore, we must say that the two forms of space and time are present in every perception. Actually these are not the forms of activity and therefore it must be admitted that mind has a faculty by which these forms are collected by perceptions. It should be remembered here that like Hume, Kant also admits that space and time are not subject to experience. We do not have the sensation of space and time. But the difference is that Hume absolutely denies the existence of space and time because they are not perceived, while Kant considers them due to mind's faculty of sensibility. According to this view, the mind is active in the process of knowledge.

Whenever we think about an object we accept the principle of causality about it. This cause-effect principle is a natural principle while thinking about objects. According to Kant, the limits and failures of empiricism point out the level after which empiricism cannot explain knowledge and do not show the limit of knowledge itself. Now if it is admitted with Hume that the law of causality is not supported by sense-experience, it only means that the sense experience is unable

to explain the principle of cause and effect. It does not disprove its existence. If we fail to find the basis of causality in senses we must try to search it in mind. In mind, there are some universal necessary characteristics of experience which are found in all mental experience. Kant calls them as categories. Among the twelve categories, these are the important, i.e. quantity, quality, relation, modality. According to Kant, no thinking about any object is possible in the absence of these categories of knowledge. Now because these categories do not come from outside, So it can be said that material of knowledge comes from outside and the mind gives form or shape to it.

The concept of the understanding play an indispensable role in knowledge.<sup>Knowledge</sup> would be impossible without the co-operation of sensation and perception on the one hand, and thinking and understanding on the other. These two preconditions of knowledge are fundamentally different, but supplement each other. Therefore, we might say that percepts and concepts both constitute the elements of all our knowledge. Because percepts without concepts are blind. While concepts without percepts are empty or foolish. All that the intellect can do is to

elaborate what is given by sensibility.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Kant. remarks: "Since the mind prescribes its law to nature, it follows that we can know a priori the universal forms of Nature".<sup>9</sup> Although all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it arises from experience".<sup>10</sup> Then the question arises, How is knowledge possible? Further, the question is divided into two: How is sense perception possible? and, How is understanding possible? The first question is answered in Transcendental Aesthetic (doctrine of the faculty of perception), while the second in the Transcendental Analytic (doctrine of concepts and judgements).

#### The Critical, Transcendental and Agnostic Philosophy of Kant:

The formulation of the transcendental method by Kant is perhaps the first attempt in modern philosophy to invent a distinctively philosophical method. Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes and Leibnitz before him were enthusiastic methodologists. Bacon recommended to Philosophy the inductive method of the natural sciences. While Hobbes and Descartes both advocated the mathematical method, and Leibnitz philosophy

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8. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 416.

9. Ibid., p. 425.

10. T.H. Green, Kant: Selections (New York: Charles Senvners Sons, 1929), pp. 26-7.

employs a combined inductive mathematical method. Since Kant it has become the fashion among philosophers to invent new philosophical methods which shall be appropriate to the peculiar subject-matter of philosophy. For example, the antithetical method of Fichte, the institutional method of Schelling and Bergson and the dialectical method of Hegel. Kant's claim to have invented a new technique of philosophical inquiry is usually implicit rather than explicit, but there can be no doubt about Kant's pretensions in the matter. In a characteristic passage, he makes it clear that the method of the transcendental philosophy is a "peculiar" method and not the mere revamping of the prevailing methods of the Sciences.

In fact, Kant did not reject empiricism and rationalism outright. His statement was that both empiricism and rationalism are right in what they affirm, but wrong in what they deny. Empiricism affirms that knowledge is constituted by experience, and, rationalism affirms that knowledge is constituted by innate or a priori ideas. Empiricism is right in as much as it points out that propositions of facts can be derived from experience. But rationalism is also right in as much as it points out that knowledge is constituted of a priori elements also. Again, empiricism is wrong in as

much as it denies the presense of a priori elements involved in knowledge. In the same way, rationalism wrongly denies that sense-experience also constitutes knowledge. The proper view as Kant stated that knowledge begins with experience, but does not necessarily originate from it. As soon as sense-experience registers its impressions on the mind, the mind at once is stirred into its own activity and contributes its own ordering activity into discrete impressions. The ordering activity is discharged by a priori elements. Knowledge proper is a joint venture of sense and understanding. Apart from sense and understanding there is reason which uselessly tries to constitute knowledge. However, the ideas of reason are not constitutive but regulative principles of knowledge. Therefore, according to Kant, knowledge begins with sense, proceeds thence to understanding and ends in the reason.

The argument from experience to its necessary presuppositions is the crux of the transcendental method, and at this point Kant's procedure diverges widely from that of traditional empiricists. Empiricism proceeds inductively from experiential facts to hypotheses and generalizations grounded in those facts; whereas Kant argues demonstrably from the facts to the necessary conditions of their possibility. The empiricist appeals to the factuality

of experience, Kant to its essential nature; the empiricist reasons inductively, Kant demonstrably.<sup>11</sup> Kant maintains, "I entitle transcendental all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible a priori". There are three modes in which the mind proceeds for ordering any empirical knowledge. In the first instance, discrete sensations have to be organised into space and time to give rise to percepts. These percepts have to be organised further by the twelve categories of understanding. Percepts and concepts joined together yield empirical knowledge. A further process of synthesis is effected a priori by the three ideas of reason, namely, the world, soul and God. However, these ideas are regulative only and concerning them no knowledge is possible. This conclusion of Kant concerning supersensible and metaphysical entities is known as Agnosticism.

Agnostic philosophy holds that human beings have no faculty for knowing certain ultimate realities. We know that they are, but we do not know what they are. Kant maintains that there are things-in-themselves which are unknown and unknowable. This doctrine of the unknowable follows from his

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11. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 417.

transcendental philosophy. According to the transcendental philosophy of Kant only those objects are known which lend themselves to human forms of knowing. Naturally objects of knowledge would be transfigured and transformed by these a priori forms of human knowing. Therefore, Kant maintains that we can know objects only as they appear to us, coloured and transformed by our ways of knowing. What these objects are in themselves can never be ascertained by us. Hence, according to Kant, knowledge of the phenomena alone is possible. While noumena or the things-in-themselves remain unknown and unknowable.<sup>12</sup>

The major works of Kant comprise three critiques of Pure Reason, Practical Reason and Judgement. Therefore, his philosophy is known as criticism, as opposed to dogmatism. According to Kant, both empiricism and rationalism were dogmatic systems. Kant says that dogmatism is an uncritical procedure in Philosophy without previous criticism of human powers of knowing itself. He maintains that empiricists dogmatically maintained that experience exclusively constituted knowledge, and in the end fell into the scepticism of Hume. Similarly, the rationalists, with equal dogmatism held that

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12. Y. Masih, A Critical History of Modern Philosophy, pp. 199-200.



innate ideas alone constituted knowledge. The dogmatist set no limit to knowledge, and the sceptic set no limit to ignorance. Thus, the one sided and exaggerated claims of dogmatic philosophers earned nothing but ridicule.<sup>13</sup>

According to Kant, a critique of pure reason is concerned with the faculty of reason in general, in respect of all knowledge after which it may strive independently of all experience. Therefore, we may say that Kant's enquiry is transcendental in which he seeks to lay base the apriori elements which the mind brings to bear upon knowing any objects whatsoever. A critical philosophy, in the sense of Kant, goes beyond any dogmatic systems in so far as it is an attempt to reach principles, which are prior not only to a particular controversy but to all controversy.<sup>13</sup> The enquiry of Kant is almost exclusively concerned with a priori contributions of mind. The subject of the present enquiry is the question, how much we can hope to achieve by reason, when all the materials and assistance of experience are taken away.<sup>14</sup>

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13. Caired, E. 'Critical Philosophy of Kant', vol. I, pp. 7-8.

14. N.K. Smith, 'Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason', p. 8.

Thus, we can say that for Kant metaphysics is not Science, but it deals with values. Metaphysical entities, according to Kant, are not objects of Scientific enquiry, but of faith. Faith for Kant lacks evidence sufficient for cognitive certainty, but is sufficient for action. Faith therefore is belief even in the face of contrary evidence which leads to devoted acts for the realization of values. Thus, for Kant metaphysics leads to all pervasive orientation to life. Secondly, Metaphysics is prompted by a natural disposition in Man. Hence, Kant would opt for metaphysics a priori. Therefore, in a very large measure, Kant leads to idealistic metaphysics. By calling his philosophy critical and transcendental, Kant has shown the primacy of mind in constituting knowledge proper. Kant in various ways wants to show that the nature of the human mind is the main factor in any knowledge whatsoever. No matter whichever be the object of knowledge, it has to be moulded, transformed and coloured by the organ of knowledge, i.e. the human mind. But the most central statement of Kant is, 'understanding maketh nature out of the materials it does not make.' Thus, it directly paved the way for Idealism which greatly formulated by Hegel after Kant.

(b) Idealism in Hegel's Predecessors and its influence on Hegel:

Idealism is a metaphysical doctrine which teaches the supremacy of the spirit over matter. The most important kind of idealism is known as Absolute Idealism. And absolute idealism holds that matter is not mind, but mind remains foundational to matter and is the key to the understanding of matter.

PRE-HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY:

A philosophical epoch is recognized by the common tasks the thinkers of that epoch set themselves as the principle business of philosophy. Hence it is useful to enquire what the pre-Hegelian's interests were. The contemporaries and immediate predecessors of Hegel was focussed on the following tasks:

(i) How to bring unity into the system of knowledge or to find a common basis for the principles of natural Science, the principles of moral judgement, of aesthetic form and the principles of the purposive dimension of the universe.

(ii) What to do with the thing-in-itself? A concept that was a byproduct of a solution but had become a problem in him

(iii) How to justify the ideas of God, freedom and immortality. It now seemed desirable to comprehend in the unity of a system the various tendencies of the age: critical idealism, Spinozism, rationalism, the faith philosophy as well as the notion of development which occupied a prominent place in French thought in the writings of Herder.<sup>15</sup>

Kant opposed mechanism, fatalism, atheism, egoism, and hedonism as well. He made room for a rational faith in human values by limiting the discursive understanding to the field of phenomena. Law rules in the world of sense experience and the subject matter of natural Sciences, i.e. every event (human actions as well) is a link in the causal chain. In 'Critique of Pure Reason' Kant confined the possibility of knowledge to the phenomenal domain and declared the thing-in-itself to be beyond the pale of knowable. However, a close reading of the other critiques conveys the impression that the notion of the things-in-itself is delineated progressively as we advance in our knowledge of the critical system concerned at first, it is but the shadow of an abstraction, but later becomes a necessary idea of reason, a

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15. F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p.451.

regulative principle expressing the rational demand for unity by means of the ideas of the soul, world and God. Further,<sup>for</sup>/Kant the idea of freedom is the possible ground of all things. The moral law expresses its reality and vouchsafes the existence of God, a spiritual kingdom, and immortality. The implication of this is that the thing-in-itself which began as an abstraction acquires a conceptual outline and is interpreted as freedom, practical reason, and will.<sup>16</sup> By virtue of an implicit correspondence between the self and the world, the moral law within us is shown to provide certitude of the existence of the supersensible world, which is beyond the reach of physico-mathematical methods of understanding. Whether Kant could have gone further, as some critics have argued, and developed the speculative possibilities suggested by the categorical imperative and attempted to transcend the limits of experience is too debatable an issue to be tackled here. However, it can be maintained in favour of Kant that he could not have attempted this task through the theoretical reason, and he found no possibility of doing it while restricting himself to immediate experience. In a well-known dictum, Kant declared that closer we come to immediacy, the nearer we are to chaos and the farther

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16. Ibid., p. 451.

from truth: percepts without concepts are blind. He also refused to admit the possibility of an 'intellectual intuition' which could enable us to meet the thing-in-itself face to face. And mystical intuition was ruled out because Kant was never prepared to entertain mysticism within the domains of his essentially rationalist domain. However, it must be noted that despite his rationalism, an element of faith is present in Kant's method, particularly in the context of the moral imperative. "We know because we believe in the moral law". It is moral truth that sets us free and proves our freedom. It was this phase of the new philosophy that had attracted the new generation as it offered an escape from the causal universe without sacrificing the legitimate claims of knowledge. Spinozism had become popular in Germany during the latter period of the 18th century and was regarded by many thinkers, even by those who rejected it, as the most consistent dogmatic system. Lessing, Herder, and Goethe were influenced by it. Fichte accepted its rigid determinism as inevitable, before his acquaintance with Kant. In fact it was the Kantian solution to the controversy between feeling and intellect combined with the idealistic world-view which formed the starting point of post-Kantian or pre-Hegelian Idealism with its own recognizable characteristic features.

Hegel's predecessors made freedom (intelligible world) the starting point of their thought. They regarded the ideal or supersensible world or the world of mind or spirit as the real world. With such a spiritual principle they tried to solve all the problems of philosophy, knowledge, experience, nature, history and even issues involving human institutions. This spiritual principle, was supposed to bring unity into knowledge, integrate the categories and unify theoretical and practical reason. It was also burdened with the additional task of enabling one to overcome the ~~dualism between mechanism and teleology. Their chain of~~ argument ran somewhat like this: reality can be understood only when it is interpreted in the light of self-determining reason, and reason understands the world only when it understands itself. It follows that the discovery of appropriate epistemological solutions will solve the problems of metaphysics.

However, epistemological solutions in this context meant something quite different since, a new meaning was given to the notion of knowledge. It was agreed that a method which limits itself to phenomena in a spatial-temporal-causal series can not offer knowledge. To know means to comprehend the active, living, synthetic spiritual process

of reality. They also agreed in their conception of reality as a process of evolution, in the organic and historical view of things. However, this happening consensus so rare in philosophy, ended here. The methods of reaching the knowledge of this reality were envisaged differently by each of them.

JOHN GOTTLIEB FICHTE (A.D. 1762-1814):

Fichte may be regarded as the founder of German Idealism. He began as a Kantian, but subsequently he attempted to make Kant's philosophy more self-consistent. But what exactly happened to Kant's thought in the process is a difficult question to answer. It has aptly been said that, "Fichte is a Kantian in about the same sense that Plato was a Socratic".<sup>17</sup> He pointed out weaknesses of Kant's philosophy. Alongwith Reinhold he maintained the necessity of deducing the categories from one single principles which is the highest conceivable. This criticism was quite valid since Kant did not make it clear as to how the different categories flowed from the unity of apperception. Secondly, Fichte also agreed with Maimon who had demonstrated how the common view of the thing-in-itself was inconsistent

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17. Falckenberg, History of Modern Philosophy, tr. Armstrong, (New York, Henry Holt. & Co. 1893), p. 419.



with the Kantian position. However, Fichte, was not content to only remove the defects of Kant's thought, and propose certain amendments, but propounded a new system in his "WISSENSC -HAF TSLEHRE" (Theory of Science)... "in which he believed the truth of Kant's philosophy shone in its purity without the inconsequent excrescences which Kant allowed to remain on it",<sup>18</sup> as claimed by Radhakrishnan.

Fichte thought that the forms of perception, categories of understanding, the categorical imperative and ~~the postulates of the practical~~ reason must be connected in a logical manner such that they can be unambiguously formulated. He wished to trace a logical relationship between these a priori principles and to show their common derivation and inter-dependence. Fichte's Wissen Schaftslehre contains the a priori principles as pre-supposed in every Science and in all knowledge of ourselves and nature. He believed that universal knowledge of every kind can logically be derived from the principles of his new Science of Wissenschaftslehre, though he was sober enough to admit that specific particular events cannot be so deduced by reason, and will have to be observed as they actually occur.

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18. Radha Krishnan, History of Philosophy-Eastern and Western, vol. II, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 263.

In his Wissen Chaftslehre Fichte says, that in our consciousness we have two types of contents, one that are within us and entirely dependent upon our imagination and will. We are free to retain or dismiss them according to our choice. While the other are those that appear as external objects and are independent of volition. They may be thought of as if they were really independent of us, and we can suppose that they owe their origin to an external thing-in-itself. This Kantian solution, which Fichte dubs 'Dogmatism' is unsatisfactory since we have no evidence of any such thing-in-itself, but posit it as the ultimate cause of our experience in a dogmatic fashion. Further, such a view denies existence of the self and the freedom of the will.

Therefore, Fichte considers an alternative thesis in which the ego is abstracted from the total contents of consciousness and assumed to exist as something independent of experience, as an I-in-itself. This may be regarded as the ultimate source of all the objects of experience. This view is 'Idealism'. It postulates beyond experience and regards the I-in-itself as free and spiritual and the seemingly external world of matter as its product.

Fichte thinks that both these philosophies, viz. Dogmatism and Idealism cannot be reconciled. One has to

make a choice between the two. And since reason cannot decide the selection will be made according to ones interest and inclination. Which kind of philosophy a person chooses will depend ultimately on what kind of a person he is ("was man fur ein Mensch ist"). In short, philosophy is a matter of temperament. "A philosophical system is not a lifeless piece of furniture that one might take or discard... but it is animated by the soul of the man who has it".<sup>19</sup> In this way Fichte appeals to the moral Character and self-respect of his readers to lead them to Idealism.

Fichte outlines an idealistic logic by which not only Kantian forms of perception and the categories, but also the contents of sense-experience, are all derived from the activities of self or ego.

Fichte emphasized that "everything must hang firmly in a single ring". He was in search of a First principle which shone by its own light and did not depend on anything else but on which everything else depended. He found this first principle in the Kantian unity of apperception or

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19. Werke, vol. I, p. 434 (quoted from Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol. III, p. 194).

self-consciousness from which he derived the notion of 'ego'. According to Fichte, ego is the unity under which everything, whether in existence or knowledge has to be subsumed. In other words, we can say that what was merely logical or epistemological for Kant, became metaphysical for Fichte. He identifies knowledge and existence in self-consciousness because in case of ego, to know and to exist are not two different things. Abstraction is not possible from ego. The principle of self-consciousness shines by its own light. It is known by intellectual intuition. It is invariably the product of a constructive act .

Fichte's process of deduction proceeds in the following fashion:

(i) The ego posits itself. But merely with the ego there is no scope of consciousness, which always requires an object, and we cannot separate consciousness from the ego, Hence, alongwith the thesis we have the anti-thesis.

(ii) The ego posits the non-ego. The unlimited ego and non-ego come into conflict with each other and give rise to contradiction. This is resolved through syntehsis.

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(iii) The ego posits itself as limited by the limited non-ego.

In this case we have determined or limited ego, and non-ego by each other. They do not come into conflict with each other as the unlimited ones do, and thus the contradiction is removed. By the notions of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis, Fichte wants to show that self-consciousness involves both subject and object, as mutually determined and inseparable from each other. By this synthesis two propositions come into being. (i) The ego posits itself as determined by the non-ego. This provides the foundation for theoretical philosophy. (ii) The ego posits non-ego as determined by the ego. This provides the foundation for practical philosophy.

Fichte regards the practical aspect of the self as more fundamental than the theoretical aspect. According to him, the self is able to conquer the non-ego solely through its practical activity. This is the main reason why Fichte's philosophy goes under the name of ethical Idealism.

As Seth says, "The Supremacy which Kant had accorded to the practical reason was taken, therefore by Fichte in a much more literal and exclusive sense than it had borne to the elder philosopher. The activity of the ego becomes the

sole principle by which the existence of the intelligible was to be explained".<sup>20</sup>

Fichte makes the world fundamentally moral and spiritual in nature and asserts the divine origin and immortal destiny of mankind. In his metaphysics the Infinite Ego (God) has posited finite individuals and an external world in opposition to them. The external world exists only for moral purposes... in order that in it individuals can find opportunity to perform their duties and realize their vocations.<sup>21</sup> Hence Fichte says, "The world is a task... the material of duty made manifest to the senses". The external world arises in our minds in order that we may overcome it, bend it our wills, and realize ourselves in it by performing our duty.<sup>22</sup>

#### Ethical Idealism of Fichte:

For Kant the primacy of moral law was a matter of 'Postulates', which Fichte replaced by affirmation. Fichte's attitude is typical of the Idealistic period which very confidently asserts that reason is able to disclose ultimate truth.

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20. A. Seth, From Kant to Hegel, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), p. 33.

21. Wright, . History of Modern Philosophy (New York: The MacMillan Co. 1954), pp. 304-5.

22. Ibid., p. 305.

Fichte's entire system is pervaded by ethical ideas. It begins with Kant's categorical imperative and ends with the cosmic moral purpose of God. The moral law implies freedom, freedom implies overcoming of obstacles, and this implies a sensible world. The moral law thus implies an indefinitely continued existence of strife, hence immortality; and it implies a universal purpose or a God.<sup>23</sup> The ethical purpose realizes itself in the world. Nature and man are but instruments in the service of the good. Therefore, the vocation of man is to do his duty, to work consciously and voluntarily for the realization of the highest good. His conscience commands him to free himself from the slavery of the senses. Besides this, each individual comes into the world with a unique 'vocation', which he alone can perform. He should feel his responsibility and respect his own moral worth and dignity. Therefore, it is man's duty to know what he is doing, and not to act unless he knows what he is doing. This implies not merely awareness but freedom and courage of conviction. Men should act always from conviction and never under the compulsion of external authority.

For Fichte, morality does not consist merely in the good will - if it did, it would be entirely vacuous.

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23 . F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 462.

The good will must express itself in concrete acts, which involves an overcoming of nature including man's own inner nature. Morality is a struggle and the ethical significance of natural goods, as well as all the dimensions of civilised life, lies in the fact that all of them have a potential place in the pursuit of the cosmic moral purpose.

Besides this, Fichte maintains that the ultimate destiny of man consists in reaching out into eternity-beyond all earthly things such as private rights, ethics, politics, the vocation of the individuals and the nations. It is the union with God in perfect love. A good man can gain consciousness of this union in his present life. This is the "way to the blessed life".

Fichte had influenced the Romantic movement initially but eventually his emphasis on ethics and the crucial place he assigns to the Ego dissatisfied the Romantics. They increasingly felt that Nature and Beauty were more significant than the Ego and morality. Consequently, attention had began to be diverted from Fichte to Schelling and other Romantic philosophers, whom Hegel was superceding.

#### FRIEDRICH WILHELM SCHELLING (1775-1854):

Schelling is considered to be the chief interpreter



of the romantic movement. "He is the connecting link between Fichte and Hegel".<sup>24</sup> Just as Fichte started as a Kantian, Schelling started as a Fichtean. But later on he criticised Fichte for his "extreme subjectivism". Fichte's non-ego was equated with the whole realm of nature, which was totally dependent upon the ego. It was one of Schelling's aims to give nature its due place. And this aim runs like a thread throughout the several phases of his philosophy.

In the first period, Schelling was under the influence of Fichte. He accepted the notion that the ultimate knowledge can be only in the Ego and hence tried to deduce the nature from the essence of ego. Soon after he began positing an opposition between mind and matter and regarded the Ego as having first produced matter, which later become conscious of itself in the mind. After this he viewed the various forms of organic life beneath man as successive stages in which this development takes place.

The second period begins when Schelling becomes more independent in thought, i.e. after Fichte left Jena in 1799.

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<sup>24</sup> Wright, History of Modern Philosophy, p. 311.

In this phase of his philosophy, nature and mind became more sharply contrasted. According to Schelling, there are two different sides to philosophy. All knowledge rests upon the agreement of the subject with an object; the union of Ego or intelligence and nature. Either we may first study nature and how mind arises in it, i.e. "Philosophy of nature", or we may take intelligence first and then ask how objects proceeds from it, i.e. "transcendental philosophy".

Schelling in his philosophy of nature, attempts in an a priori manner to indicate the successive stages of an ascending evolution, without sufficient knowledge of Science to make his account plausible and to show that the later and higher species have actually descended from the earlier ones. While in his "transcendental philosophy of idealism", Schelling tries to bringout the different stages of evolution as the development of the observing mind, and in doing so imitates Kant by distinguishing between theoretical and practical philosophy and also the philosophy of art. He considers Art to be the highest, because in the intuition of the artist the Ego beholdsitself and thus the teleology becomes revealed to Ego. Unlike in Kant and Fichte, God becomes the known object of the immediate intellectual intuition of the artist.

Schelling passes into his third period about 1802, in which he shows the influence of spinoza, maintaining that Mind and matter are identical. In the field of knowledge, truth is the form of matter. These two are absolutely synthesized in a higher form. For this, first he adopted a mathematical method to deduce the 'Philosophy of Identity' and later sought to workout a more immediate method of intellectual intuition known as 'construction' by which the Absolute is seen to be in all, and all in the Absolute; the whole is expressed in every relation and object. But he fails to show how an Absolute, i.e., pure identity can be related to a world of diverse persons and things.

The fourth period of Schelling begins from about 1804, in which his approach becomes more mystical. At this stage Schelling stresses the difference between the Absolute and the Universe. The Soul has fallen from the plane of intellectuality to that of the senses and must seek reunion with God. This is symbolized by the myths of Plato and neo-Platonists, which he reinterpreted in a Christian framework.

Schelling's fifth period begins in 1809, when <sup>he</sup> came under the influence of German Christian mystic, Jacob Boehme.

He now thinks of God as the "Primal Absolute Identity". God differentiates Himself into the world of particular beings and then returns to Himself in a higher unity as a result of this differentiation. In this phase Schelling seems to think of God as "Life" subject to suffering and growth.

Schelling identifies nature with spirit or intelligence in his "Philosophy of Nature", because the laws and the forms of natural beings are all intelligible. "Nature and mind, being and thought, are not, however, as Spinoza held, two parallel aspects of the Absolute, but different steps, stages or epochs in the evolution of absolute mind. The Absolute unfolds itself, it has a history: it is an evolutionary process, the highest goal of which is self-consciousness".<sup>25</sup> Fichte was of the opinion that reason is incapable of imposing rational forms on the external and independent reality. The rational forms are forms of intelligence, and what bears them should be itself intelligent. Therefore, in this way he presents a monistic and dynamic view of nature and makes a wide use of the principle of development to show how nature passing through various forms and grades moves towards its highest form, i.e., self-consciousness in which the duality of mind and matter and personality and nature

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25 . F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 467.

disappear into a single intelligent scheme. Schelling thinks that self-consciousness as such is mere form and it is the rational content that provides value to it. Spirit realizes itself not only in consciousness but in the intelligible contents as well.

Finally, Schelling's philosophy of identity discloses the nature of reason as it is in itself. Here, Schelling means by reason the 'absolute reason' which is conceived as the total indifference of the objective. Radhakrishnan maintains, "The standpoint of philosophy is the standpoint of reason and the philosophic cognition is the cognition of things as they are in themselves, i.e., as they are in reason".<sup>26</sup> Such cognition gives us 'reason in its self-identity'. Hence the 'nature of reason is identity with itself'. There is nothing except reason, and it is undivided, the law of reason is the law of identity. But absolute identity cannot exist itself, except by setting up itself as subject and object. However, there is merely a quantitative difference between subject and object, and not a qualitative one, because in subject and object we have the same

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26. Radha Krishnan, History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western, p. 268.

identity but with the difference of emphasis or 'preponderance', of subjectivity and objectivity. However, when we come to the field of difference... we seem to have already departed from absolute identity and are in the realm of finitude.<sup>27</sup> Schelling was of the opinion that nothing individual exists in its own right but as a mode of absolute identity. Things can be viewed only from the point of view of totality, in the perfect equilibrium of subjectivity and objectivity.

Though Schelling could not formulate a thorough system like that of his predecessors yet in some respects he advanced beyond Fichte. Hegel appropriated various features in Schelling's view of the Absolute and its gradual development in nature, history and worked them over into a more coherent systematic account which he defended by a better logical method, i.e. Dialectic.

Besides this his earlier thought was undoubtedly an essential connecting link between Fichte and Hegel. And some of his evolutionary ideas paved the way for Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson as well.

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27. Ibid., p. 268.

Fichte's and Schelling's influence on Hegel:

In the beginning Hegel was under the influence of both Fichte and Schelling. But very soon Schelling's conception of Reality or Absolute appeared faulty to Hegel. He builds his philosophy on the foundations laid by Fichte and Schelling. He agrees with the former in insisting on a logical method. He undertakes to put the world-view of Schelling on a rational Scientific basis. He also agrees with the latter, in identifying logic with ontology or metaphysics; and finally with both in conceiving reality as a living developing process. According to Hegel, nature and mind or reason are one as taken by Fichte and Schelling; yet he subordinates nature to reason. Hegel maintains that all being and reason are identical. The same process that is at work in reason, is present everywhere. This is the sense in which Hegel asserts that whatever is real is rational, and whatever is rational is real. There is a logic in nature as well as in history, and the universe is at bottom a logical system. The Absolute is not an undifferentiated whole, as Schelling had taught. In his criticism of Schelling, Hegel characterizes his Absolute as the night in which all cows are black. Nor is the Absolute a substance - as Spinoza had taught, rather it is a subject, which means that it is life, process, evolution as well as consciousness and knowledge.<sup>28</sup> At another place Hegel also

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<sup>28</sup> F. Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 478.

condemned the Absolute of Schelling as "a shot out of a pistol". Consequently, he thought that the Absolute to which our understanding could not arise through intelligible rational steps could not be considered satisfactory in philosophy. The Absolute for Hegel, should be one as well as many and the subject as well as object. But in order to understand how these opposite characteristics are synthesised, we must examine his method of dialectic.



## C H A P T E R -IV

## HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

### (a) Hegel's view on Religion:

Religion occupies a very significant place in the philosophy of Hegel. Philosophy as a whole and in its parts is determined by its object, and Reality as the absolutely individual whole is the supreme object of philosophy. While religion is not an object in this sense, it comes within the domain of philosophy by virtue of being an attitude towards an object. And since the Absolute is the supreme object for Hegel and the object of the religious attitude is the Absolute in its unity, it is not surprising that religion should be one of the most important sections in the Phenomenology. Hegel arrived at the main insights of his system on the basis of the Christian faith. In fact, it would not be a distortion to regard Hegel's whole system as an attempt to see the Christian mysteries in everything. Whatever, every natural process, every form of human activity, and every logical transition.

Hegel says that 'to begin with, it is necessary to recollect generally what object we have before us in the Philosophy of Religion, and what is our ordinary idea of religion. We know that in religion we withdraw ~~ours~~ ourselves from

what is temporal, and that religion is for our consciousness that religion in which all the enigmas of the world are solved, all the contradictions of deeper-reaching thought have their meaning unveiled, and where the voice of the heart's pain is silenced. It is the region of eternal truth, of eternal rest, of eternal peace. Speaking generally, it is by reason of his being spirit, that man is man; and from man as spirit proceed all the developments of the sciences and arts, the interest of political life, and all those conditions which have reference to man's freedom and will. All that has worth and dignity for man, all wherein he seeks his happiness, his glory, and his pride, finds its ultimate centre in religion, in the thought, the consciousness, and the feeling of God. Thus, God is the beginning of all things, and the end of all things. As all things proceed from this point, so all return back to it again. In religion man places himself in relation to this centre, in which all other relations concentrate themselves, and in doing the same he rises up to the highest level of consciousness which is free from relation and is absolutely self-sufficient.<sup>1</sup> Religion, as something which is occupied

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1. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, tr. and ed. by the Rev. E.B. Speirs, B.D., and J.B. Sanderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), vol. I, pp. 1-2.

with this final object and end, is therefore absolutely free, and is its own end. The existence of religion is presupposed as forming what is fundamental in everyone. It is not the concern of philosophy to produce religion in any individual. So far as man's essential nature is concerned, nothing new is to be introduced into him. To try to do this would be absurd.

Hegel begins his treatment of the Religious consciousness by noting how often in the previous development we have come on phases that deserved the name 'religious'. There was something religious in the activities of the Scientific Understanding, when it located explanatory forces and laws beneath the surface of objective existence. We were studying a mood of Religion when we dealt with the anguish of the Unhappy Consciousness. In the ethical sphere, we dealt with a religious phase that was concerned with mysterious family and blood-ties, with ancestral allegiances and the powers of the 'nether world'. In the world of the Enlightenment we dealt with a religious phase which placed its object safely and aseptically beyond all Rational Insight.<sup>2</sup> The self-conscious spiritual individual then rose to the height of

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2. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 131.

its development: in the consciousness of loving forgiveness, which broke down the barriers between persons, it at length overcame the 'otherness of the other'. Henceforth, according to Hegel, it has surmounted even consciousness. It can have no alien object before it, but only itself. The consciousness in which it first gains possession of this truth is called by Hegel 'Religion', which is thereby given a content identical with the central theses of his own philosophy. This Religious consciousness only differs from the philosophical in that it retains what Hegel calls 'a form of representation' (Vorstellung). Further, the religious view will have varying degrees of development of the 'world', the natural and social order.

Hegel may be held to have given a merely persuasive definition of 'Religion'. He defines Religion, not as it would be defined for instance by sociologists or anthropologists, but in a manner to suit the requirements of his system. His main motive seems to be to secure for the difficult theses of his philosophy, the approval that normally accompanies the words 'Religion' and 'Religious'. It may be claimed that Hegel is simply cashing in on this widespread approval, and securing its advantages for his own system. In fact, he did

gain much approval in his lifetime by generally conveying the impression of being a defender of religious and political orthodoxy. Hegel might have stressed its 'form of representation' rather than its notional content, and might have emphasized its supersession, rather than its preservation, in ultimate philosophical truth. But from another point of view Hegel's account of Religion is by no means indefensible. It can be claimed in extenuation of Hegel's account, <sup>that</sup> he did not impose his philosophical theses on the religion he found about him, but these theses were the fruits of some sustained reflection on that religion.

In the phases of the Religious consciousness now to be gone through, Hegel tells us that the previous phenomenological relations of spirit to its 'world' will all be resumed. There will be a sensory, a perceptual, a scientifically-understanding, a customary-ethical, and a moralistic phase of Religion. These stages will also divide themselves into: (i) Natural Religion, in which the religious consciousness assumes the form of consciousness Proper, of the awareness of an object, a thing, in which the self-conscious and the spiritual are implicit; (ii) The Religion of Art, the product of Hellenic Spirit, which corresponds to self-consciousness

Proper, and finally (iii) Absolute or Revealed Religion, the expression of christian civilization, in which the actual form of religion is said to be adequate to its 'notion'.<sup>3</sup>

Now, we can deduce that, for Hegel, although he admitted that in religion <sup>men treat</sup> God as a spirit other than themselves, that God is the Absolute and the Absolute is the whole and real. Religion is the Divine Spirit Knowing Himself through the manifestations of finite spirits. It is the reconciliation of man to God.

#### RELIGIONS PRIOR TO CHRISTIANITY:

According to Hegel, the first form of Natural Religion is the Religion of Light, of which he holds the ancient Zoroastrian religion to have been the historic expression. In this the 'self-conscious essence which is all truth, and which knows all reality as itself 'becomes aware of itself in the mode of sense-certainty. Hegel says that it beholds itself in the form of 'being', i.e., of something immediate 'out there' not as endowed with one or other of the contingent qualities of sense, but as manifesting a certain form of

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3. Ibid., p. 133.

formlessness', which will make it into a being filled with the notion of spirit. This 'form of formlessness' the religious consciousness finds ready to hand in the 'pure, all-containing, and all pervading light of the morning' which may disperse itself over natural shapes, but which remains always the same 'simple-impalpable, splendid essence'.<sup>4</sup>

But just as Sense-certainty finds that it cannot keep its vague object before it, i.e., the immediate 'this', but must proceed to turn it into some more definite object of perception, therefore, the Religious consciousness too cannot rest content with an object so formless, but must go on to particularize it into a variety of vegetable and animal forms. We leave the pure radiance of the Iranian dayspring, for the pullulating multiplicity of the Indian religious fancy, which often expresses itself in the murderous, guilty forms of warring animal species, each representing some particular national spirit.<sup>5</sup>

The warring variety of this type of religious expression is clearly inadequate to the Religious Consciousness

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4. G.W.F. Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind, tr. by J.B. Baillie, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955), pp.699-700.

5. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 134.



Therefore, it 'rubs itself away' into the regular expressions characteristic of the Scientific Understanding. Spirit becomes an Artificer, revealed to itself in various crystalline, pyramidal and needle-like forms. It constructs in an instinctive manner like the building habits of bees. Now, we have passed over to the religious expressions of ancient Egypt. In these the creative unrest of consciousness is present mainly in the artificer (craftman), and not in his work, but it tends to invade his monumental products, showing itself in stylized animal forms faintly touched with humanity. The inadequacy of such instinctive art to self-consciousness then becomes manifest in the form of sphinxes, as Hegel says, 'ambiguous beings, a riddle even to themselves, the conscious fighting with the unconscious, the simple interior with the polymorphous exterior, coupling obscurity of thought with clearness of expression'.<sup>6</sup> In the Sphinx this stylized, instinctive, and constructive religious consciousness may be said to break-down.

Now we pass from the Nature-religions of the early East to the 'Art religion' of Greece. In the Phenomenology the two modes of spiritual consciousness are not kept apart, as

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6. F. Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 707.

they are in the treatment of 'Absolute Spirit' in the Encyclopaedia. Hegel's treatment of Greek religion as a 'Religion of Art' is characteristic of German romanticism. So too is the view that while art may be an expression of the ethical life of the free city-community, with which the individual feels himself at one, the Religion of art arises only when the individual's naive trust in his secure communal ways has been shaken.<sup>7</sup> When spirit has cause only to mourn over the loss of its secure ethical background, it will begin to bring forth an 'absolute art' which is raised high above reality, and according to Hegel, whose forms shadow forth 'the night in which the Ethical Substance was betrayed, and made into a subject'.<sup>8</sup>

The artistic religious consciousness has its first typical expression in the statue of the God, which combines the externality of nature with an idealized expression of self-consciousness. Here the exact and crystalline forms beloved by the Understanding are discarded. According to Hegel's view each such marble God stands for the ethical life

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7. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 135.

8. F.Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 714.

of a particular people because in worshipping its God, the community is really achieving self-consciousness. Hence the temples of the Gods are for the use of citizens, and their honour is the honour of 'a high-minded people rich in its art'.

The spiritual suffering and effort demand another medium for their expression and Hegel finds this in various forms of religious speech, e.g., as the hymn and the prophetic or ambiguous utterance etc. He also finds it in the combination of speech and action which happens in the religious cult. According to Hegel, 'the cult is constituted by a two-sided movement in which a godlike form, moving in the affective element of self-consciousness, and the same form at rest in the element of thinghood, give up their distinct destinations, so that the unity, which is the notion of their essence, comes into existence. In this the self achieves the consciousness of the descent of the Divine Essence from its transcendent beyondness, while what was previously the unreal and merely objective, achieves thereby, the genuine reality of self-consciousness'.<sup>9</sup> This two-sided movement we can see in the case of religious

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9 . Ibid., p. 720.

sacrifice, where the objects sacrificed are said to express both the worshipper's surrender of his own personality, and the descent into actuality and touch with humanity of the God to whom the objects are sacrificed. An even more close amalgamation (unity) of the divine with human occurs in the various religious mysteries connected with Demeter and Dionysus. These are mysterious and mystical not in the sense of involving hidden secrets, but in the sense that in them, 'the self knows itself as one with the Essence. Here the Absolute Being achieves the position of a thing seen, handled, smelt as well as tasted and it becomes an object of desire and is made one with the self in actual enjoyment.<sup>10</sup> However, there remains something unself-conscious, something largely natural in this form of religious amalgamation. Hegel, says 'Its self-conscious life is therefore merely the mystry of the Bread and the wine, of Ceres and Bacchus, not of the genuine upper Gods, whose individuality includes self-consciousness as an essential element in itself. Spirit has not yet offered itself upto this consciousness as self-conscious spirit, and the mystry of the Bread and Wine is not as yet the mystry of Flesh and Blood.<sup>11</sup> In other words,

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10. Ibid., p.728.

11. Ibid., 728.

we may say that we are yet only dealing with a confused anticipation of the word made Flesh, and its continuance in the life of the religious community.

Therefore, at this point Hegel might have made a natural and easy transition to his Absolute or Revealed Religion, which was for him manifest in Christianity. Hegel maintains that the activities which connected with the major athletic festivals are religious activities. For Hegel, athletes are lively, living work of art, and matching strength with beauty. They represent the 'Essence' in general and also the essence of their people.

Neither Olympic athleticism nor Dionysian enthusiasm can be wholly adequate expressions of the union of self-consciousness with the essence of things. Because in the former there is too spiritless a clearness while in the latter there is too much confusion and wild stammering. It is in a form of speech more coherent than an Oracle's, and less emotional and narrow in its direction than that of a hymn. Therefore, Hegel passes on to the consideration of the spiritual attitudes lying behind the epic, tragic and comic or funny literature of great age, which Hegel regards as religious phenomena. In the epic the individual self-conscious

person is inadequately emphasized being present merely as the anonymous, background singer. This unemphasized individual person then claims a more adequate expression in the tragic form of literature, where he speaks directly. While in the comic form of literature, the individual claims his complete and absolute due. He silences the gnomic wisdom of chorus, liquidates the abstract forms of the Gods and reveal himself under all high masks and appearances as the everyday, common place and vulgar man as well.<sup>12</sup>

From the resolution of all absolutes in the individualistic comic irony. Hegel now leaps dialectically to the individualized Incarnate World of Christianity. This extreme leap resembles that from phrenology to the reasonable self in society, or from the death-dealing guillotine to the categorical Imperative of Kant. The Comic consciousness is summed up in the light-hearted proposition: 'I, the self, am the Absolute Essence' but this light-hearted utterance at once permits conversion to the serious statement: 'The Absolute Essence is I, the self', in which self-consciousness is merely an adjunct, a predicate to something more substantial.

Hegel tells that this mortal breach between the outward and substantial, on the one hand, and the inward and self-

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12. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 137.

conscious, on the other, can be healed only by a two fold movement such as by a movement of substantial towards the Subjective and of the Subjective towards the substantial. This need is met by a one-sided spread of undisciplined subjectivity, over the whole territory recognised as objective, as in the Gnosticism and the Mysteriology-religions. This passes away when this one-sided movement of subjectivity towards objectivity is met by a balancing movement from the objective towards the subjective and when self-consciousness finds itself in what is independently and immediately there. Here we find that Hegel is pointing to the essential superiority of the word made Flesh over the 'Aeons' of Valentinus or, the Unconquered Sun of Mithraism. Here the former is encountered in the concrete particularity of sense, whereas the latter has merely the shadowy, projected being of private fantasy.<sup>13</sup>

Henceforth Hegel says, 'This fact that Absolute Spirit has given itself the form of self-consciousness both in itself, and also for its own consciousness, now appears in as much as it is the belief of the world that the Spirit is there as a self-consciousness, i.e. as an actual human being, that it is there immediate sense-certainty, that the believing consciousness sees and feels and hears the Godhead. In this manner it is no

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13. Ibid., pp. 138-9.

imagination but an actuality in the believer. Consciousness therefore does not start from the inner life of thought, and the existence of the God, rather does it start from what is immediately present and recognizes the God in it'.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up we may say that in the above passage what Hegel thinks important is not the Incarnatio Filii Dei, but the belief in such an incarnation. According to him, if this incarnation is said to be actual and not imaginary then its actuality is one in the believer, rather than in historical person of Jesus. There is no doubt that the person i.e. Jesus, was the vehicle through which 'Absolute Religion', the realization that the divine nature must achieve self-consciousness in man, first became explicit. We see that for Hegel the realization rather than the vehicle remains the important thing. Therefore, we may conclude by saying that Hegel properly be regarded as the father of 'modernism', that always attacked but never crushed, and trustworthy expression of Christian belief.

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14. F. Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 757-8.



(b) The Concept of 'Absolute Religion' or 'Revealed Religion'  
(CHRISTIANITY)

Now we have reached the realised notion or conception of religion, the perfect religion, according to Hegel, in which it is the notion itself that is its own object. We defined religion as the self-consciousness of God. Thus God is self-consciousness, He knows Himself in a consciousness which is different from Him, which is potentially the consciousness of God, since it knows its identity with God, an identity which is mediated by the negation of finitude. It is this notion which constitutes the content of religion. According to Hegel, we define God by saying that He distinguishes Himself from Himself, and is an object for Himself but He is purely identical with Himself in this distinction, is in fact Spirit. Thus God is Spirit, the spirit of His Church in fact, i.e., of those who worship Him. This is the perfect religion. Therefore, it is revealed here that what God is. He is no longer a Being above and beyond this world, an unknown, for He has told men what He is. God knows Himself in the finite spirit. This simply means that God is revealed. The misery, the sorrow of the world, was the condition, the preparation on the subjective side for the consciousness of free spirit, as the absolutely free and therefore infinite spirit.<sup>15</sup>

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15. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. II, pp. 327-8.

Religion is something revealed only when the notion or conception of religion itself exists for itself. We may also put it that religion or the notion of religion has become objective to itself, not in the form of finite objectivity, but rather in such a way in accordance with its notion, that it is objective to itself. According to Hegel, Absolute Religion or what he means by 'Revealed Religion', is a religion in which the Divine Being is known for what it is, a being whose nature is to be self-conscious, and also to reveal itself to itself. In the Phenomenology of Mind, Hegel comments: 'There is something secret to consciousness in its object, as long as this appears strange and alien to itself, and is not known as itself. This secretness ceases when the Essence becomes objective Spirit as Spirit... Itself is only manifest to itself in its own certainty of self, its object is the self: Self, however, is nothing foreign, but inseparable unity with itself, the immediate universal',<sup>16</sup> It is this immediate universality which is the true content of a belief in the Incarnation. Hegel holds uncompromisingly that God can be truly reached by the Speculative knowledge only. In other words, he holds that God's being consists only in speculative knowledge. However, the content of this knowledge is held to be one with that of Revealed Religion.

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<sup>16</sup> F. Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 759.

Hegel maintains that "religion has just that which it itself is, the consciousness of the Essence, for its object; it gets an objective form in it, it actually is, just as, to begin with, it existed as Notion and only as the Notion, or just as at first it was our Notion. The absolute religion is <sup>the</sup>revealed religion, the religion which has itself for its content, itsfulness".<sup>17</sup>

According to Findlay, "The religious presentation of speculative truth is, as we saw, an imaginative, pictorial presentation: it has not yet risen to the pure universality of conceptual thought. The union of universality with immediacy remains for it their union in the individual self-consciousness of Jesus, which excludes the believer's own self-consciousness. The movement towards a fuller universalization even of such universality-in-particularity, begins when the Incarnation shifts into the past, when its present reality becomes a matter of memory or tradition".<sup>18</sup> According to Hegel, the Religious consciousness never completely rises above the externality of imaginative presentation. When it seeks for the

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17. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. II, pp. 329-30.

18. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 140.

roots of its spiritual life, it tends to go back to the historical circumstances of its origin as Hegel says to the 'soulless recollection of an ideally constructed individual figure and its existence in the past'.<sup>19</sup> For Hegel, to seek for the historical Jesus is to lose touch with the risen and ascended Christ.

According to Hegel, "It is the Christian religion which is the perfect religion, the religion which represents the Being of spirit in a realised form, or for itself, the religion in which religion has itself become objective in relation to itself. In it the universal Spirit and the peculiar spirit, the infinite Spirit and the finite spirit, are inseparably connected; it is their absolute identity which constitutes this religion and is its substance or content. The universal Power is the substance which, since it is potentially quite as much subject as substance, now posits this potential being which belongs to it, and in consequence distinguishes itself from itself, communicates itself to knowledge, to the finite spirit; but in so doing, Just because it is a moment in its own development, it remains with itself, and in the act of dividing itself up returns undivided to itself".<sup>20</sup>

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19 F. Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 764-5.

20. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. II, p. 330.

As generally understood the object of theology is to get to know God as the merely objective God, who is absolutely separated from the subjective consciousness, and is thus an outward object, Just as the sky, the sun, etc. Just opposite to this the Notion of the absolute religion can be so presented as to suggest that what we have got to do with is not anything of this external sort, but religion itself, i.e. the unity of this idea which we call God with the conscious subject.

Hegel maintains that "we cannot know God as object, or get a real knowledge of Him, and the main thing, what we are really concerned about, is merely the subjective manner of knowing Him, and our subjective religious condition".<sup>21</sup> Ultimately we find that it is possible from the standpoint of consciousness to reach this subjectivity.

Hegel now gives a phenomenological restatement of the doctrines of the Trinity, Creation, and Fall, etc. Hegel believes that Spirit conceived abstractly as a 'Substance' in the element of pure thought is the simple, self-identical and eternal Essence. Hegel afterwards called the Essence as

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21. Ibid., p. 331.

the idea, and which religion knows as 'the Father'. But Hegel further/says that this simple, and eternal Essence would be spiritual only in name, it was conceived only as such an abstract Essence. It must present itself in so far as the religious imagination transforms this conceptual entailment into an historical process, the eternal Essence may be said to give birth to something other than itself (God and son begotten before all worlds). But this procession to otherness is at the same time and return to itself, since the conscious son, and the Father of whom He is conscious, are the one and the same spiritual reality.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, we have the materials for a Trinity consisting of the Essence, of the self-conscious being that knows it, and of the knowledge of the former in the latter. Hegel says, 'the differences that are made are as immediately dissolved as they are made, and are as immediately made as they are dissolved, and the True and Real is just this movement turned circlewise on itself'.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the whole Trinity lives enshrined in the Cartesian Cogito. However, the imagination of the religious community cannot rise to this Pitch of abstraction.

The same logical entailments which connects the elements of self-consciousness, and which is misleadingly

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22. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, pp. 140-1.

23. F. Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 766-7.

represented as a temporal process, now leads to the existence of a world. The distinction between the pure Essence of Divinity and the self-conscious word is too abstract and categorical to be a real distinction. Hegel says that it is a distinction of love, in which there is no sufficient opposition of nature. Therefore, the eternal abstract Spirit must create a world, the word 'creation' being merely an imaginative symbol for the entailment holding between the being of an abstract notion and the being of cases in which it may be instantiated. The Spirit which is the sense of the world must itself show an initial aspect of separateness and immediacy.<sup>24</sup> At first it must appear as a natural individual in this world and must regard the world as a system of things foreign to itself. However, being spirit, it must progress from the immediacy of sense-experience to the inwardness of pure thought and must in the process lose its innocence. On the one hand, we may say that it becomes conscious of what is good, i.e. its thinking being, and on the other, of what is bad, i.e., its sensuous being. This epistemological progress from sense experience to perception and thought is turned by the religious imagination into the story of temptation and expulsion from paradise.

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24. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 141.

The world in which the merely natural, self-retreating and therefore bad self-consciousness has a place, must find a place also for the good self-consciousness, i.e., for Spirit returning to self out of sensuousness. Now Hegel passes on to a stage where spirit is conscious of itself in universal form, as the Spirit inspiring a religious community. The Divine Man who has died is the communal self-consciousness implicit: the community must make His self-consciousness explicitly its own. The death and resurrection of the Redeemer must lose their simple and natural significance as events in the life history of a particular individual. They must become phases in the life of a Spirit which lives and dies daily in the religious community.<sup>25</sup> The death involved is a death of particularity, which covers both the particularity of sense and the particularity of interest and impulse, and a revival to universality. It is also the death of all imaginative religious presentations, and a revival to a more inward, notional form of religious experience. The death of the Mediator must be appropriated by the religious community. With this dissolution of the Mediator in the communal consciousness will go to the death of the divine Essence, as something abstract and apart. Therefore, Hegel says that 'this hard saying is the expression of the inner most simple

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25. F. Hegel, Phenomenology, p. 780.



knowledge of self, the return of consciousness into the deep night of I=I, that can no more distinguish or know anything outside of itself'.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, we may say that the ultimate fate of all imaginative religious presentations is to hand over their majesty and authority to self-conscious Spirit. The religious community does not realize that how revolutionary it is. It feels its union with the Divine in the form of love and affection. Henceforth, Hegel has veiled his treatment of Religion in much orthodox-sounding language, however its outcome is very clear. In all its forms theism is an imaginative distortion of final truth. The God outside of us who saves us by His grace, is a misleading graphic expression for saving forces inherent to self-conscious spirit. And the religious approach must be transcended in the final illumination. It would be wrong to regard Hegel as a humanist because he has not deposed God in order to put Man, whether as an individual or group of individuals, in His place. The self-conscious Spirit which plays the part of God in his system is not the complex, but the impersonal, which more and more takes over the individual, and becomes manifest and conscious in him. Therefore, we may conclude that Hegel's

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28. Ibid., p. 782.

religion, like that of Aristotles, which consists in straining every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the Absolute Religion is the religion of Truth and Freedom, i.e., Christianity, according to Hegel. Here truth means that the mind does not take up such an attitude to the objective as would imply that this is something foreign to it. While freedom brings out the real meaning of truth and is the essential characteristic of self-consciousness.

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27: J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p.143.

(c) The Relationship between Religion and Philosophy:

Religion occupies a peculiar position in the philosophy of Hegel. However, as pointed out earlier, according to Hegel, Philosophy as a whole and in its parts is determined by its object. Philosophy always has a definite form of individuality to deal with. The Supreme object of philosophy is reality as the absolutely individual whole and the evolution of its content is the systematic development of the Absolute Idea. The various divisions and sub-divisions of the philosophical system, finite mind, nature, etc. are dealt with this ultimate reality. Their content is evolved in detail as moments of the supreme truth, and therefore gives rise to the various parts of the absolute philosophy, the various philosophical sciences. A philosophical Science deals with the systematic evolution of the real in terms of its notion. However, the real is a whole of parts and a unity of diverse elements.<sup>28</sup>

But as far as religion is concerned, it is not an object in the sense of sphere of reality. However, we may say that it is an attitude towards an object and the only form of that object possible is either the Absolute or some specific sphere of the Absolute. Hegel maintains that the

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28. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 6, p. 584.

object of the religious attitudes is the Absolute in its completeness, in its unity and in its truth as well. But ultimately this reality is also the unique sphere of philosophy, or speculative Science and such speculation is very much necessary and sufficient to give the complete truth about the Absolute.

According to Hegel, 'the object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truth in its objectivity, God and nothing but God, and the explication of God. Philosophy is not a wisdom of the world, but is knowledge of what is not of the world, it is not knowledge which concerns external mass, or empirical existence and life, but is knowledge of that which is eternal, of what God is, and what flows out of His nature. For this His nature must reveal and develop itself. Philosophy, therefore, only unfolds itself when it unfolds religion, and in unfolding itself it unfolds religion".<sup>29</sup>

But further we face a difficulty that it cannot be said that the Absolute in Philosophy is not the same as the Absolute in religion. Hegel's system is against such a view. He says that the Absolute in Philosophy is forcibly identified with God in religion, and in the highest religion there is not

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29. F. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Vol. I, p. 19

even the likeness of contrast. The Absolute is the Supreme truth and the supreme truth is one. Now the solution of this difficulty is found by Hegel in drawing a distinction between 'form' <sup>in</sup> which the Absolute is grasped in the case of religion and of philosophy, and the 'content' which they both deal with. The 'content' is exactly the same while the 'form' is different in the two cases. The same Absolute is present in both and in the same sense, e.g. as self-consciousness, spirit, and rational. Its method of realization is the same, viz. it is 'conscious of itself' in the speculative philosophy as well as in the religious mind. But the medium through which its realization is effected, the 'form' in which the 'content' is expressed, is in religion that of feeling, of sensuous intuition, whereas in philosophy the 'form' is that of the notion qua-notion.<sup>30</sup>

However, this solution only raises a further difficulty. We have seen that the notion is the final form in which truth appears and the notion alone is wholly adequate to convey absolute truth. There is no doubt that Hegel's view is that the religious 'form' is not in itself completely adequate to the essential nature of Absolute Spirit,

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30. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 6, p. 584.

and that the religious 'form' calls for and is compelled by its own 'dialectic' to pass to the Supreme form, in which truth is embodied the notion. Hence, in Hegel's view, philosophy, and not religion, is the highest expression of self-conscious Spirit, and that speculation is the final stage and 'crown' of the life of Spirit.<sup>31</sup>

Further Hegel says that the "religion and philosophy come to be one. Philosophy is itself, in fact, worship; it is religion, for in the same way it renounces subjective notions and opinions in order to occupy itself with God. Philosophy is thus identical with religion, but the distinction is that it is so in a peculiar manner, distinct from the manner of looking at things which is commonly called religion as such. What they have in common is, that they are religion; what distinguishes them from each other is merely the kind and manner of religion we find in each. It is in the peculiar way in which they both occupy themselves with God that the distinction comes out. It is just here, however, that the difficulties lie which appear so great, that it is even regarded as an impossibility that philosophy should be one with religion. Hence comes the suspicion with which philosophy is looked upon by theology, and the antagonistic

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31. Ibid., pp. 584-5.

attitude of religion and philosophy".<sup>32</sup> In accordance with this opposite attitude philosophy seems to act injuriously, destructively upon religion, and the way in which it occupies itself with God seems to be positively different from religion. This opposition is, however, held to be a recognised fact than that unity of religion and philosophy just insisted upon.

Now as Hegel maintains that if it is possible to convey the truth about the Absolute in the form which is the essence of the Absolute, i.e., self-conscious reason, then religion is simply the way of error. On the other hand, if religion is not the way of error then the claim of philosophy to express the final truth about the Absolute is untenable, because the Absolute desires to express itself in the sphere of feeling, intuition as well as through the notion. Therefore, religion is in strictness unnecessary, and philosophy is all that God requires to convey His truth to finite spirit. While on the latter alternative, religion is necessary and philosophy has no claim to priority of value over religion. Either philosophy fulfills a purpose different from religion, or philosophy is not by itself the highest and completely concrete expression of the Absolute.<sup>33</sup>

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32. F.Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. I, p.20.

33. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 6, p. 585.

In religion and pure speculation we have before us what the Absolute Spirit is in and for itself and how it articulates itself. Hegel says that "Religion is not consciousness of this or that truth in individual objects, but of the absolute truth, of truth as the Universal, the All-comprehending, outside of which there lies nothing at all. The content of its consciousness is further the Universally True, which exists on its own account or in and for itself, which determines itself, and is not determined from without".<sup>34</sup> Therefore, we may say that the religion is the self-consciousness of God, not simply how finite spirit is conscious of God, but how the Absolute Spirit is conscious of itself in finite spirit. The Absolute Spirit manifests itself in man, which openly reveals its very nature. Similarly, speculative philosophy is the self-consciousness of the Absolute Spirit and the notion of Absolute Mind articulating itself to itself and to finite mind. Therefore, the system of notions constituting the substance of the Absolute Reason is the thought of God as He was or is in the beginning. So the self-manifestation in religion and the self-articulation in speculative sciences, both proceed from the same Spirit.

Now we arrive at the conclusion after viewing the above that Hegel's efforts to draw a line between religion and

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34. Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, vol. I, p. 22.



philosophy is vacillating rather than to be fixed. Because at one time we find that art treated as a part of religion and at another time the same religion treated as separate from art. Again, religion is regarded as independent of philosophy, and at another time religion is treated as an introduction to philosophical truth. Similarly, at one time, religion is a phase of philosophy, at another philosophy is a phase of religion, because philosophy, too, is the service of God. Religion was accepted as a fact of history and its nature had to be traced to its source in the Absolute. In the religious life, finite spirit claims to be impart with Absolute Spirit. Similarly, we may say that religion, in Hegel's view, is a conscious relation of finite spirit to the Absolute as spirit. Hegel's view of philosophy required him to prove that such communion arises from the necessary procedure of Absolute Spirit and that it was a stage in the evolution of the Absolute Idea as explained by Philosophy.

(d) The Concept of Spirit as Self-consciousness of Universal form :

In this chapter, we shall take up Hegel's notion of Geist, which is sometimes translated as 'Mind', but which is perhaps more aptly translated as 'Spirit', as the central notion in terms of which his system may be understood. In so far as Hegel gives a name to the central notion of his system, he more often refers to it as the Idea, or the Absolute Idea, than 'Spirit'. The idea of Spirit is the key to Hegel's philosophy.

Let us begin our study of the notion of Geist with a few citations from Hegel's actual writings. Hegel remarks in the Phenomenology : 'The spiritual alone is real. It is the essence, what exists in itself. It contains itself and becomes determinate, it becomes other-being and being-for-itself, and, in all this determinateness and externality to self, it remains in itself. It is in and for itself. This being-in-and-for-itself is at first merely for us, or in itself; it is merely Spiritual Substance. But it must also become this for itself. In other words, it must become an object to itself, but one also in which this objectivity is forthwith overcome, and reflected into itself.'<sup>35</sup> Or again: 'The living substance is that being which is truly subject, or what is the same which only is truly real in so far as it is the movement

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35. Hegel, *Phenomenology*, P. 86.

of positing itself, or in mediating between becoming-other-than-self and itself. It is, as Subject, than pure and simple Negativity, which splits up what is simple, and duplicates and opposes things to one another, but which at the same time also negates this indifferent diversity and opposition. True Being is nothing but this self-restoring Identity, this reflection-into-self-in-other-being: it is not an original unity as such, not immediate as such. It is its own becoming, the circle which presupposes its end as its purpose and its beginning, and which is actual in the end, in being carried out'. Or again; 'In itself the divine life is no doubt undisturbed identity and unity with itself, which does not take seriously either other-being or alienation, or the overcoming of either. But this only is the case from an abstractedly universal standpoint, which forgets that the nature of this life is to be for itself, and which therefore ignores the self-movement inherent in its form'. Or lastly: 'It is of supreme importance in my view that the true should not merely be conceived and expressed as Substance, but as Subject as well'.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly in the Lesser Logic, Hegel says of Spirit: 'The Life of Spirit in its immediacy appears as innocence and naive confidence, but the very essence of Spirit implies that

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36. Hegel, Phenomenology, pp. 80-2.

this immediate condition should be superseded. For spiritual life is distinguished from natural, and particularly from animal, life in this, that it does not merely remain in itself, but is for itself. This standpoint of severance must, however, itself be overcome: Spirit must, through its own act, returned to a unified state... Though it is that inflicts the wounds and that heals them too'.<sup>37</sup> Or again: 'Nature is by no means something fixed and finished for itself, which could also exist without Spirit: rather does it first reach its aim and truth in Spirit. Just so Spirit on its part is not merely something abstractly beyond nature, but exists truly and shows itself to be spirit, in so far as it contains nature as subjugated in itself'.<sup>38</sup> Or again: 'To think the necessary is to resolve its hardness, it is the encountering of one's own in the other ... As something existing for self this liberation may be called "I", as completely developed it may be called Free Spirit, as experience Love, as enjoyment Blessedness'.<sup>39</sup> Or again: 'The movement of the Notion must be treated as if it were a game: the other that it postulates is in reality not another'.<sup>40</sup> Or lastly: 'The Idea is the central seeing of itself

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(From *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*):  
 37. Hegel, Lesser Logic/ tr. by Wallace, 1892, pp. 54-55.

38. Ibid., p. 180.

39. Ibid., p. 285.

40. Ibid., p. 289.

in the other, the notion that has carried itself out into objectivity, the object whose inner purposiveness is essential subjectivity'.<sup>41</sup>

Likewise in the Philosophy of Spirit we read the following: 'For us Spirit has Nature as its presupposition, whose Truth, and absolute Prins it therefore is. In this Truth Nature has vanished, and Spirit has revealed itself as the Idea brought to its Being-for-self, whose Object as much as Subject is the Notion. This identity is absolute negativity, because the Notion has its complete outward objectivity in Nature, but this its externalization is done away with, and it has become identical with self in the latter. But it is only this identity in so far as it has come back out of Nature'.<sup>42</sup> Or again: 'The essence of Spirit is for this reason formally Freedom the absolute negativity of the Notion as identity with self. According to this formal determination it can abstract from everything external including its own externality, its existence. It can endure the negation of its individual immediacy, the infinite anguish, i.e. it can preserve itself affirmatively in this negativity, and be identical with self. This possibility is its abstract universality as it is for itself'.<sup>43</sup> Or lastly:

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41. Ibid., p. 356.

42. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Spirit, tr. by William Wallace, 1894, p. 163.

43. Ibid., p. 163.

'Spirit is the infinite Idea, and finitude has there the meaning of the inadequacy of the concept and reality, with the added determination that it is an appearance within itself-an appearance which Spirit implicitly before itself as a barrier, in order that, by removing the latter, it may have and know freedom for itself as its own essence'.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, in all these passages we find the same picture of what can only be called a mystical game. Spirit is infinite, but it must lay claim to itself to be finite. It also pretends to distinguish itself from everything finite and to become fully aware of its own infinity. Spirit is the only reality, but it must confront itself with something seemingly alien, in order to see through its own self-deception, to become aware that it is the only reality. In fact, spirit is not merely the goal of its own game, but is indistinguishable from that game itself. These propositions are familiar enough in mystical literature.

Now after going through the above passages, in which Hegel has set forth his paradoxical concept of Spirit, we must give a more systematic account of the notion, in a manner which does not depart too far from Hegel's own .

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<sup>44</sup>. Ibid., p. 165.

First of all, we may say that for Hegel Spirit means both the object and the subject of self-consciousness. It is what exists when there are not merely objects of varying types — embodying in externalized form notions of which they are unconscious—but in which there are also conscious experiences and references directed to such objects, and which exists in even more explicit form when there not only are such conscious references, but also the reflex sense of the sort of activity and the self which pervades them all—and which also, according to Hegel, lies behind their objects—when this activity and this self are not merely behind the scenes or in themselves, but also become manifest or for themselves. For Hegel, spirit is what I refer to by the pronoun 'I', what I am aware of when I enter most intimately into myself, when I am not merely absorbed in my commerce with definite objects, but am also aware of myself as active in dealing with them.<sup>45</sup>

However, Hegel says that the 'I' or 'Self' which is conscious, and which we deal with in self-consciousness, is no merely determinate, particular being. No doubt I am a particular person, e.g. Marcus Aurelius, son of Antoninus Pius, Princeps of the Roman Empire, etc. I am furnished with definite determinations and occupy a definite position in space and in world history. I am also surrounded by other things and

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45. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, p. 39.

person similarly circumstanced. However, the 'I' of which I am conscious in self-consciousness is not tied down to any such single position or set of determinations. Therefore, whatever or wherever it is, it could always have been elsewhere or otherwise. Hegel calls this 'I' as the absolute negativity of the notion. According to Hegel, 'It can endure the negation of its individual immediacy, the infinite anguish, i.e. it can preserve itself affirmatively in this negativity and be identical with self'.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, we may say in short that there is nothing that I cannot set before myself in thought. There is also no situation or set of properties into which I cannot think myself, without needing to sacrifice my identity. It is through this power to take on, or to lay aside, any and every thinkable determination that my spiritual identity is established. Hegel refers in this connection to the implicitly, universal meaning of the pronoun 'I'.

However, for Hegel, the 'I' revealed in self-consciousness is not some mysterious Substance, which lies behind all my conscious activities. Hegel is quite free from the neo-realist picture of conscious life as a system of 'search-lights', of which certain primary ones are trained upon objects, while other secondary beams are trained on these primary beams, and

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46. F. Hegel, Philosophy of Spirit, p. 163.



can perhaps succeed in lighting up their source as well. For Hegel the spiritual 'I' of self-consciousness must be conceived as a Subject, but not as a Substance. In fact, it cannot be separated from its conscious and self-conscious activities.<sup>47</sup>

Now we state that what Hegel did mean by the 'consciousness' of which Spirit is the Subject. As we said, it is not the illumination of an unchanged object by a metaphorical search light trained on it from without. It is rather a process in which an object yields up a universal meaning or unifying pattern of which it is an instance. Such universals or patterns exist in natural objects in an unconscious 'petrified' form: their disengagement, and the ranging of objects under them, is, however, an affair of 'consciousness', and in fact, consciousness is no more for Hegel than just the disengagement of such universals and patterns. For there to be the consciousness of something, that thing must to some extent depart from the mutual externality of existence in time and space, and from the hard definiteness of sense. Therefore, for Hegel, consciousness may be described as the 'self-activating Universal' or as the 'Universal in action' (das sich selbsttätigende allgemeine or das thatige Allgemeine).<sup>48</sup> It is the activity which disengages

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47. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A re-examination, p. 40.

48. F. Hegel, L. Logic, p. 36.

universality and unity from particularity and plurality, and which interprets the latter through the former.

The 'Self', the Subject, which is conscious seems to mean no more for Hegel than this same universalizing or unifying activity, described by a somewhat misleading substantival speech. Therefore, for Hegel, the pronoun 'I' has its root meaning in the unity and universality characteristic of all conscious experience. To say that I am self-conscious is accordingly to say no more than that this active universality is itself<sup>disengaged,</sup> through its own activity, from the specific activities in which it is operative, and becomes manifest as the Universal it is, that it ceases to operate obscurely in other experiences, but becomes explicit, for itself. In disengaging universality from anything, Spirit is in a sense disengaging 'itself' from such a thing, and accomplished spiritual self-consciousness is merely a more explicit form of the same process.<sup>49</sup>

The nature of Spirit as the self-active Universal makes it reasonable for Hegel to call it 'infinite'. He calls it this, not as being capable of indefinite extension, but in the special Hegalian sense of being self-contained and

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49. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, pp. 41-2.

complete. It is this infinity because it can deal with nothing without drawing out a universal or pattern from it, i.e. without making it similar to itself. It has also this infinity because it can come into contact with nothing that is not a condition of its own activity and of its own self-awareness. And, having this infinity, this 'absolute negativity', Spirit is also by its nature impersonal or suprapersonal. For Hegel, Spirit is in fact most fully manifest in the various intersubjective norms which raise conscious experience above what is merely personal and finite, in the categories and canons of logic and science, the rules of legal and moral behaviour, of aesthetic taste. Further, Hegel thinks that the whole content of these norms follows from the 'infinity' and the freedom of Spirit. Hegel says, in Logic, the mind is 'in its own home element and therefore free', such freedom meaning that it 'never leaves its own ground, but gives the law to itself', but in which it also 'renounces its selfish and particular being, and sinks itself in the thing'.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the whole content of morality and legality springs from the unlimited freedom of the pure 'self'.

But though Spirit must thus be regarded as 'infinite', entirely free and suprapersonal, it must also be regarded as finite, bounded and personal. There is a logical connection

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50. F. Hegel, L. Logic, p. 49.

between its having the former properties and its having the latter. This lies in the fact that the universality and unity of spirit is essentially active and conscious. We may say that being active it must have something to act upon, and being conscious it must have something by contrast with which it can be conscious of what it is. The 'absolute negativity' of spirit would be nothing if there were nothing for it to negate nor could it be suprapersonal if there were no personal differences for it to transcend. Therefore, it is essential for Spirit to be wedded to particular finite contents and to determinate places in the world, as it is for it to be freely ranging and 'infinite', since it is only by being the former that it can be latter. And it is as essential for spirit to assume the form of particular persons, identified with private interest, as it is for it to be impersonal, disinterested and 'public'. This may appear superficially as a contradiction, but quite obviously it is not, since we are dealing with different aspects of the same 'reality'. Therefore, spirit may perhaps better be described as what is infinite-in-finitude, or impersonal-in-being-personal, than what is merely infinite and impersonal. Hegel, therefore, gives a place to the ordinary use of 'I' as referring to the particular finite person, who is certainly not an impersonal 'World-Spirit'.<sup>51</sup>

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51. J.N. Findlay, Hegel: A Re-examination, pp. 43-4.

It is further characteristic of Hegel's notion of spirit that it is impossible to separate the activity or process of overcoming the various forms of other-being, from the self-consciousness which results from this process. The self-conscious

Spirit is a result of the submission of otherness in the sense of having the latter as a necessary condition. It is not a result in the sense that it exists after this submission.<sup>52</sup>

Finally, we may say that the crowning point in the notion of spirit is the only or the absolute reality. Hegel calls it 'the True', or the 'Truth of everything'. By this Hegel means that one can only understand anything adequately in so far as it is seen as a stage towards, or as a condition of, the emergence of the self-conscious Spirit. The highest stage in the self-consciousness of Spirit is the simple realization that it is the 'truth' of everything. This stage of self-consciousness is called by Hegel the 'Absolute Idea'. Concretely it is achieved in certain experiences of aesthetic creation i.e. Art, of religious devotion i.e., Religion, and of philosophical illumination i.e., Philosophy. In this Absolute Idea or Absolute Spirit error and finitude do not disappear but they are merely 'overcome'.

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52. Ibid., p. 46.

## C H A P T E R -V

## C O N C L U S I O N

### The implications of Hegel's Philosophy of Religion :

When we begin to examine the implications of Hegel's philosophy of Religion for Philosophy, Mysticism and Art, we see that the issue impinged upon is mainly the relations of spirit with Nature. As we know, Hegel indicates how Spirit separates its subjective life from the objectivity of external Nature. However, Spirit must not merely shape the world to its will. It must also see the world as having no other function but to be so shaped. It must envision itself as the 'truth' of everything. It will enjoy this vision immediately and sensuously in Art, emotionally and representatively in Religion, and speculatively in Philosophy, these being the three forms of Absolute Spirit or Mind. These are briefly sketched by Hegel in the Encyclopaedia, but are also worked over in his three courses of lectures on Aesthetics, on the Philosophy of Religion and on the History of Philosophy.

Art, the first form of Absolute Spirit, according to Hegel, expresses the Idea in an 'immediate' manner, through material given to the senses. A work of Art does not state that self-conscious Spirit is the truth of everything, but it shows how, what is non-spiritual can be taken up and overcome in Spirit. It therefore prepares us for the higher intimations

of Religion and Philosophy. Hegel maintains that works of art, although they are not thoughts and notions, have the power of thinking spirit in them. For this reason the work of Art is a manifestation of thought externalising itself, and therefore belongs to the realm of understanding, thought and Spirit, in so far as it is amenable to rational treatment in the form of aesthetic criticism. However, it is not the highest form the Spirit can attain.

Hegel stresses the curious fusion of sense and meaning which is characteristic of works of Art. To appreciate a Work of Art is not merely to perceive separately its sensual content and the idea represented, but to intuit their harmonious union as an organic whole. For this very reason a successful work of Art makes it impossible to separate these two elements in our perception. It compels us to realize its symbolic character in relation to reality. It is evident from this that Hegel is rejecting the representational theory of Art in favour of a symbolic approach. The corollary of this approach is that Art has a Truth distinct from 'actuality' or fact. Here, we can see Hegel anticipating some of the most significant developments in Aesthetics and Literary theory which have culminated in this century.

Further, the symbolising function of Art is also an idealizing function. It purifies the actual and presents forms in their ideal significance.



From his general treatment of the Ideal, or Aesthetic Idea, Hegel passes on to a Philosophy of Art-history, as well as to a Philosophy of various Art-forms. Art-history is studied under the three headings of Symbolic, Classic and Romantic Art. According to Hegel, Symbolic Art covers the luxurious and fantastic, which for him are, however, formless and tasteless. With characteristic Eurocentrism, Hegel clubs all oriental Art under this category. It is an Art which strains in vain after the ideal of spiritual self-envisagement. Symbolic Art is sublime Art, in the precise Kantian sense of the word. In Classical Art we have the highest expression of which, Art qua Art is capable. In Romantic Art, we see Art striving to express, what is in fact a higher form of spiritual life. There must always be an inadequacy, from the point of view of spiritual self-envisagement, in that union of ideal meaning and sensuous content which is the aim of all Art. It is this inadequacy which receives artistic expression in Romantic Art. In fact, Hegel sees the return of the lack of definition and measure characteristic of Symbolic Art in Romantic Art.

We now come to the central point of our concern, which is the transition from Art to Religion. This transition, according to Hegel is straight forward. In Art the Idea is expressed through a fusion of sense and significance. But this symbolic character is not sufficient to express the Idea.

In Religion the Idea receives a better expression, a so-called revelation in the Feelings, Intuitions, Presentations and Worshipful Actions of the Individual, where artistic presentations only play a subordinate role.

However, for Hegel, Religion and Philosophy both have an identical content. According to him a religious term like 'God' will reveal itself as meaning no more than the 'I' of self-consciousness, which is inseparable from the finite particular self. That is, God has 'created ' the world of Nature and finite spirit, but only in the sense that these are the necessary conditions of pure self-consciousness. To put it concisely, God is God only in so far as He knows Himself; His self-knowledge is His self-consciousness in Man and hence is Man's knowledge of God.

In Hegel's philosophy of religion, the relationship between consciousness as such and the religious sensibility has a crucial role. This is understood in terms of the modes such as feeling and representation. Let us first look at the mode of feeling. According to Hegel, Feeling does not mean a simple affective state like pleasure or pain. Feeling, for Hegel is a fundamental ontological concept denoting a consciousness which can be of any object whatever, whether simple or complex, valid or delusive, which may include

subjective attitudes, e.g. remorse, but which is different from all other ways of being conscious in that it exhibits a total lack of analytic clarity. In particular, we may say that a state of Feeling is one in which there is no clear distinction between what is subjective and what is objective. It is a mode in which external determinants are appropriated in such a way as to partly fuse consciousness with what it is conscious of. Therefore, in the religious context, we may say that the Religious Feeling-relationship is one in which God is appropriated, just as an object's hardness is appropriated when I feel it. Therefore, my Feeling consciousness of God naturally develops into my reflective consciousness of God's universal being, on the one hand, and my own profound nullity, on the other, and also into various attitudes of fear, gratitude, compassion, etc. between us. Hegel further emphasizes that we are not more closely in touch with God, when we feel Him than when we think of Him. Hegel believes that Feeling due to its lack of analytical clarity, may yield us a confused or even false picture of reality. It is only in thought that we can apprehend God Validly, and as He absolutely is.

Next let us discuss the second mode which is representation. First of all, we must understand that representation is not exactly the same as an image or mental picture,

but has the precisely defined sense of an image raised to the form of universality. Hence, representations have the status of thoughts, despite their essential differences from mental pictures. They take whatever notions they deal with, like the things in sense, and they treat them as external to one another like existents in Space and Time, and they merely note the relationship among them, instead of gaining insight into their necessity. In the context of Religion, thought about the anger of God, about the creation of God's Son, about the Creation of the world, etc. all involve this representational style of picture-thought, to eliminate which would be to turn Religion into Speculative Philosophy.

Hegel also has certain views regarding the historical development of Religion. According to him religion has passed through various phases, beginning with a magical, purely natural stage of Religion, and passing through the Chinese Religion of Measure, the Indian Religion of Fantasy ( which, needless to add, are extremely simplistic depictions of these religions ) through the Religions of Light (Zoroastrianism), of suffering (the Syriac), and of Riddle ( the Egyptian ), to Judaism, Greek Religion (of Beauty), and Roman Religion.

Finally, he passes on to Absolute or Revealed Religion. Hegel identifies this stage of Religion with Christianity. Here he deals with 'Kingdom' of the Father and with the Kingdoms of the Son and the Spirit. Thus the death of death involved in the Christian Resurrection and Ascention (The ascent of Jesus Christ to heaven on the fortieth day after His Re-Surrection) is held to be a representational expression of the 'absolute negativity' of Spirit, the principle that Spirit can affirm itself only by first denying itself and then denying that denial dialectically. However, absurd Hegel's ideas may appear on the surface, one must admit that there is nothing arbitrary and external in Hegel's detailed explanations. They are consistent with the basic orientations of his philosophy.

However, Religion with its picture-thought will always be involved in inconsistencies. Its speculative content will not always accord with its representation and quasi-empirical mode of statement. Therefore, it ultimately moves towards Philosophy, where the abstract concept is alone capable of becoming a concrete Idea. For Hegel, Philosophy is simply the History of Philosophy as restated in the medium of pure thought; the supreme achievement of Spirit is accordingly to recapitulate and understand its own reflective history from Thales' identification of the 'all'

with water, to Hegel's own identification of it with self-conscious Spirit. Hegel also maintains that the last philosophy of an era necessarily sums up all previous stages of philosophy, and in the highest phase, which for Hegel is his own system, represents the self-consciousness of Spirit.

With reference to his own philosophy Hegel says that the World-Spirit has now become free from all foreign objective essence and is at last apprehending itself as Absolute Spirit. The struggle of the finite self-consciousness with the absolute self-consciousness, which appeared to the former as outside of itself, ceases. The finite self-consciousness has ceased to be finite, and the absolute self-consciousness on the other hand, has gained the reality that it previously lacked. The history of philosophy depicts this struggle which culminates in the attainment of actuality by the Spirit. However, we must not imagine that Hegel is claiming finality to his own system. The claim to reference of Absolute does not imply it. It only means that up to that point, Truth can be apprehended only in that fashion. Therefore, Hegelian Truth, in this context, is a strictly contemporary affair, and Hegel expects no more permanence for his own system than to be preserved in such good systems as come after it.

Now let us try to make a few observations about  
Hegel's philosophy in general, <sup>After</sup> going through the various phases

and among different views points, we may say that Hegel was an anti-metaphysician, Empiricist, Idealist and Dialectician. Hegel's Philosophy does much to satisfy all these conceptions of Philosophy. It is unsatisfactory to any of them because it does so much justice to all of them. While it analyses ordinary concepts and ways of speech, and leaves them undisturbed at their level, it also subjects them to devastating higher-level criticism, while it allows us to think in alternative ways, at the summit of which there is only one completely satisfactory mode of conception, i.e. the Absolute Idea.

Hegel's philosophy is one of the most anti-metaphysical of philosophical systems. Hegel often speaks the language of a metaphysical theology, but such language is a mere concession to the pictorial mode of religious expression. Now, the claim that Hegel is an anti-metaphysician may sound surprising. Let us clarify this point. Hegel has an ontology. But he has no metaphysics in the sense that he does not posit any ultimate reality, be it God or Absolute, beyond the experience of human individuals. This does not, however, mean that Hegel is a mere humanist. We might say that it is only through the medium of individual human Spirits that his Absolute can be at all. Similarly, we may say that Hegel shows no tendency to undermine or overthrow the facts, assumptions or methods of the mathematical or natural Sciences. This impression conveyed

only because Hegel attempts to relate the facts of science to a broader speculative perspective, and in this attempt, presents the facts in a different light.

Finally, we may say that Hegel's philosophy is not static. It is dynamic. It develops its principles and modes of interpretation out of other less developed modes and principles. This 'dialectical' side to Hegel's philosophy, is at once the source of some of its supreme merits and also of its demerits.



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